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The Winning of Mary

Or, HEARTS OF GOLD

By Fergus Jerome

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CHAPTER I.
THE LADY'S MAID.

THE stanch Old English steamer, Triton, was merrily plowing her way along the regular course from Hong Kong to Calcutta via Singapore; and in the early morning, barefooted, and only alive to my duties as an ordinary sailor aboard the same, I was engaged with several other huskies in sluicing down the decks with hose and buckets, when Mary Smith, looking as pretty in her maid's attire as an Eastern houri, came from below, presumably to watch the sun rise from its watery bed.

I was written down upon the ship's articles as an ordinary seaman, able to do all that might be expected from one of that lowly class; and when the steamer docked at her destination I would be free to go whither I listed, since my engagement covered only that lone voyage.

Why this chanced to be so different from the usual custom will be made plainer during the course of my narrative; but let it be sufficient to say now that time was the chief factor to be considered in my estimation of things just then.

And while my name was plainly registered on the ship's books, and in their head offices at Hong Kong, as John Henry Adrian, somehow my fellow workers had immediately fallen into the habit of abbreviating the same, so that even the bos'n now shouted out to me as "John Henry."

I could not help it if out of the corner of my eye I watched the trim figure of Mary Smith, as she stood there by the rail, and yet I feared that there was something like an expression of amusement upon her face, as though she might have become aware of my mute adoration, and were smiling at the audacity of a barefooted sailorman, swashing down the decks, daring to cast admiring glances on a little beauty like herself.

As I moved here and there, always striving to keep within seeing distance of the maid in her black dress with which the white apron and jaunty little dab of a snowy cap seemed to blend so neatly, I suddenly became aware of the fact that my pet aversion had come upon the scene. This was a second-class passenger, a dashing-looking fellow who sported much jewelry, and may have been a gambler for all I knew, and whose name I had discovered was Lucian Burgoyne.

From the very start he had seemed to be entranced with the maid, endeavoring by every means in his power to chat with her; but it was plain to my eyes that she tried to ignore his advances, for I had seen her frequently go below upon his appearing on deck. It was strange for a maid to act in that way, when nineteen out of twenty would have been only too delighted to receive the evident admiration of so fine-looking a gentleman; but then I realized that Mary Smith must indeed be the twentieth.

Even now I saw her show signs of uneasiness, and glance hurriedly around as if tempted to flee; but he had adroitly cut off all avenues of escape, being something of a schemer; and there was a positive look of triumph on his dark face, as if he had made up his mind she should hear what he wished to say.

She looked toward me, and I swear there was appeal in her lovely eyes; at any rate the conviction thrilled me in a manner that gave me no end of surprise, and at the same time I was filled with indignation to think that so fine a girl could not show herself on deck without being harassed by the unwelcome attentions of a lady-killer like this Burgoyne.

So, with a sudden bold inspiration, I switched my hose around, and edged that way, under the impression that there was still something to be done to clear the deck around that section.

I saw the man speak to the lady's maid, watched the red flame rush to her face, and knew that he was impudently trying to make love to her there in plain sight. That was enough for me.

Strangely the hose in my hands became unmanageable for about three seconds, and was turned just far enough that the volume of water shot straight into the face of poor Mr. Burgoyne, and trailed down his clothes, so that in a jiffy he was saturated from head to foot, and the worst looking lady-killer you ever saw—all this, too, without hardly a drop touching the garments of the little maid whom he had been addressing so fervently. Then, as if appalled at what a beastly blunder I had made, I switched the stream of water aside, and went on sluicing the deck.

I heard a little scream of alarm, and guessing what it signified, turned quickly to find the furious masher at my elbow, his fist clenched all ready for a blow; but he did not strike.

Perhaps the sight of my athletic figure, and the way in which I fixed him with a determined and cool stare, gave him to understand that if he but laid so much as a finger upon my person he would fare considerably worse than a ducking. He contented himself with uttering maledictions that better became the racing compound than the deck of a steamer, with a lady close by, shook his trembling forefinger in my face, at which I smiled disdainfully, and then uttering terrible threats as to what would happen after he had complained of my atrocious conduct to the captain, hurried from the deck, leaving a trail of juice behind as the surplus water oozed from his white duck trousers.

The way was now clear for the little maid to descend; but somehow she did not choose to accept of the opening, but continued to stand there by the rail, watching the coming of the red sun, and occasionally shooting a curious glance toward the spot where I was working, as though interested in the humble sailorman, despite his lowly and barefooted condition.

And presently, when she did go down below, having seen the sun appear above the horizon, Mary Smith, as she passed me by, said in the sweetest voice I can ever remember hearing in all my life, just the two words:

"Thank you!"

I could never forget them, for they were fated to remain in my memory forever; the look that accompanied them almost drove me wild. There was admiration expressed in the dancing eyes, an arch expression, as if even in a common sailor she could see and appreciate that I was above all things—a man.

Of course I expected no end of a row on account of my daring method of ridding pretty Mary Smith of an unwelcome suitor; but no matter what came of it I stood ready and willing to do the same thing over again for her—yes, twenty times a week, from which it may be judged how far gone I found myself under the attack of those melting blue eyes.

But it happened that the bos'n had been an eye witness of the whole affair, and being a man with a family at home, his sympathies were enlisted on the side of the pretty little maid; so that he took occasion to say to me aside that I had done a "bully good job," and that he would try to put a flea in the ear of Captain Crowninshield, letting him know how matters stood; so that, while prom-

ising the indignant Burgoyne full satisfaction, nothing would come of the incident, save that I had gained the hatred of a villain—and possibly a shred of gratitude from Mary Smith.

I supposed that she must be an Irish girl, because of her bonny blue eyes, together with her black hair, since that combination is seldom found in others save daughters of the Ever Green Isle; but there was never a trace of such nationality in her voice, and I confessed myself all at sea in the matter. Apparently I was taking overmuch interest in a young woman who hardly knew such a person as John Henry, able seaman, existed, and who would certainly fade from my vision as soon as we reached Calcutta, since I expected to ship on another vessel headed for England as soon as an opening occurred.

I had seen her in company with an elderly lady at times, waiting on her with a charming assiduity that made me quite envy the jolly-faced Mrs. Partington, who seemed so kind to her pretty maid, and kept the men away from her all the time they were on deck, for which I mentally thanked her; for the girl's beauty was such that every one felt drawn toward her.

We started with fair weather, but I knew something of the treacherous nature of this China Sea, and its ability to kick up a nasty storm almost on the spur of the moment, so that this splendid opening could not be considered any criterion to judge what our passage to Singapore might prove to be.

The strangest part of it all to me was the fact that although I had lived to the age of thirty-five, and had roved the Seven Seas pretty much all my life, until now I had never felt my pulses thrilled by the sight of a girl's face.

I pondered over this fact more than once, while supposed to be sleeping in my hammock down below, after my watch on deck had ended; and it always ended up with a dubious shake of the head and a sigh, as though at any rate there was little use of my worrying over the matter, since the charming little lady's maid occupied a sphere in life far above the humble condition of my servitude; and then I would chuckle as though vastly amused over something.

That very night it was bright moonlight, and while on deck I managed to hover near the place where she was most apt to appear; for like most travelers on these steamers in tropical waters, she seemed to have a favorite nook.

Sure enough, as though she might have read the wish of my heart, Mary Smith came on deck, and crept down behind the shelter of the Captain's cabin forward, where she could observe the moonlit sea and the dancing silvery wavelets without being exposed to view.

I knew it was her natural modesty that caused her to select that spot, and laughed at the ridiculous idea of my being employed near by having anything to do with it; for the men passengers were apt to take advantage of the fact of her being only a lady's maid, and seemed to fancy that they could flirt to their heart's content with her; but none of them ever dared address her twice in a familiar, patronizing way, for the fire could flash in those blue orbs, and indignation cause her little figure to swell until the abashed fellow would back away with hasty apologies.

Twice had I seen it done, and on each occasion could hardly refrain from clapping my hands in delight—she seemed so like a little queen, despite her garb of servitude.

Something called me away for a few minutes, and when I returned to my post I became aware from the voices that issued from the shadow that some one had joined her; and my heart sank in dismay as I began to suspect that after all possibly the little witch had succumbed to the open admiration of one of her would-be escorts, and that from that moment I would be left out of her.

Then it smote me that the voice was familiar, and of a sudden the truth flashed upon my mind that it was the Adonis, Burgoyne; could it be possible that her dislike for the dashing chap had been assumed, and having served as a spur to draw him on, was now discarded—you see past experience had warned me that some women can play a part on the stage of life equal to that of the most talented performer in the dramatic line.

But I had immediate reason to change my mind, for I heard her voice raised in indignant protests, and quickly I straightened up, eager to fly to her relief if so be she needed any one to champion her cause, for there seemed to be no one else near.

When I heard what seemed to be a slight scuffle, and caught her exclamation of "Take that, you insulting scoundrel," accompanied by a very positive sound that could hardly be anything but a smart slap in the face, I hesitated no longer, but propelled myself across the deck as though on wings, regardless of everything save that Mary Smith was being distressed and needed my help!

CHAPTER II.

INTO THE MAW OF THE SEA.

Perhaps I am a little too impetuous by nature; and hardly apt to think twice before injecting my personality into a matter that after all concerns only the two participants; but under the circumstances what would you have me do?

She had not cried out for help, but I could read extremity in the manner of her indignant speech toward Burgoyne, and that was enough for John Henry; though the Captain pitched me over the side of the vessel for striking one of his passengers yet would I esteem it a service well done, and complacently strike out for the nearest shore, which I was hardly likely ever to reach.

I think I hit the fellow directly in the eye—at least, I know that was my intention when I let fly; and the way in which he went sprawling over upon the deck was sufficient evidence in my mind that I must have accomplished all I set out to perform.

He scrambled to his feet wildly, glared at me as I stood there ready to repeat the dose if he ventured to attack me, muttered some anathemas, and then scuttled off, doubtless fearing the just indignation of the passengers, should they hear the complaint of the lady's maid. Which left me standing about three feet from Mary Smith, and feeling my flesh creep strangely with a sensation that was new to me.

Since the danger was past I would have returned to my duties, not daring to appear bold in addressing her, when she held out her little hand, and impulsively exclaimed:

"Twice you have rendered me a very great service, John Henry, and I must thank you—indeed, I do thank you from my heart. If that fellow dares complain to the Captain, do not think that anything will come of it; for I shall tell him the facts and he will commend instead of enforcing discipline, perhaps reward you. You did that in my service, and it would be but a wretched return if I allowed you to get into any trouble on my account."

I touched her hand and felt as though a score of hot needles had pricked me, it sent such a magnetic message all the way to my heart; but remembering my humble position I did not dare to squeeze that charming little member as I should have liked to do, but immediately let it drop; but at the same time I resolved that since the sensation was so very delightful, I would repeat the operation again at some future day, perhaps many times, Heaven favoring.

And yet little did I dream at that moment what a strange combination of startling circumstances was fated to entwine my destiny with that of Mary Smith; for I had not the gift of prophecy, and the curtain of the future persisted in remaining undrawn.

I managed to answer her after a fashion; but somehow proximity to the little witch seemed to thicken my speech, so that I fear I made but a sorry mess of it; but at any rate I fancy she understood something of the cause of my awkwardness, for my eyes must have expressed the admiration that filled my soul—at any event she did not look angry as she had when others had shown plainly their sentiments, possibly because she could understand that mine rested on the rock of genuine worship, and not a mere desire to flirt with a lady's maid.

So long as she sat there in the shadow I hovered near, happy in the consciousness that perhaps she might even be looking upon me with condescension as a handy defender in time of stress, a position I should most eagerly have been delighted to fill for all time, fortune willing. When she finally arose to go below she even went out of her way to pass close to me, and with one of her witching smiles that I carried with me for hours she murmured:

"Good night, John Henry, and thank you again for your kindness."

I could only bow my head, unable to catch my voice—what mattered it to me if there was a touch of condescension in her tones, as though she realized she were speaking with an inferior being, a common sailorman accustomed to earning his living by the "sweat of his brow" that being a part of the contract of the bond under which I had signed the roll of the Triton—I could readily forgive such a natural thing, especially since she had not as yet found any opportunity to talk with me, and learn that I had aspirations above my calling.

Later on my watch on deck came to an end, and I sought my hammock to dream of blue-eyed angels smiling at me and beckoning me to approach and wait upon them in the most tantalizing manner possible; so that awakening, I was fain to groan upon discovering that it was a delusion and a snare, with darkness surrounding me, and the old steamer rolling heavily in some newly-risen gale.

The pitching and tossing grew more and more violent as the minutes crept along, so that it was utterly out of the question for me to go to sleep again; nor was I much surprised when the call of the bos'n brought the whole crew on deck to take a hand in managing the vessel.

I knew we were in the grip of one of those sudden typhoons that swoop down upon the unwary China Sea traveler, with scant warning from compass or other means of anticipating the threatening weather; and while I had seen some pretty ugly prospects in my voyaging and adventuring in times past, I whistled as I contemplated that inky black sky, and heard the rush of the madly driven waters sweeping along the sides of the staggering vessel.

Apparently we were in for a screecher, and it might be that my little span of life were fated to be suddenly cut short here, and in brief order; but although I do not confess to being anything of a fatalist, these things never worry me, since long ago it became my maxim to do my best, and leave the rest to a higher power.

In another hour, midway between eight bells and dawn, the hurricane had increased to such dimensions that even the veteran Captain was plainly appalled, and his manner convinced me more than anything else that we were being driven toward the breakers that possibly banked some island of group of the same dotting the China Sea, upon which the steamer would be broken to pieces should she once strike.

There was trouble alow and aloft—the engines worked only in shifts, for it seemed as though either one of them chanced to be out of condition all the time, and as fast as repairs were made by the energetic Scotch chief engineer and his men the other side would go bad; so that we staggered on under but half-power; then the extreme violence of the typhoon wrecked our deck works so that there was a litter of stuff floating about from end to end, and the wash of the fearful seas that continually broke over our side made it perilous to be caught without a rope tied about the waist.

I wondered what would become of us in case we struck those terrible reefs; and while I did whatever was demanded of me in the line of duty, my mind was made up to watch my chance to keep one person under my observation, and in the dreadful moment of disaster strive as became an athlete, proud of his skill and endurance, to save her from the greedy waters.

Instead of growing better as the minutes dragged by, the storm if anything only accentuated its fury; and the poor vessel was being dashed about at the mercy of the mountainous waves like some cork, subject to the whims and caprices of chance.

The passengers were of course all awake and dressed, prepared for the worst, since I saw the Captain going among them endeavoring to say words of comfort, but followed by several of the crew distributing life preservers, and adjusting them to the frightened group.

Mary Smith stood off by herself, with white face, but upon which I failed to see the abject fear dominating all the other women; something impelled me to spring to her side bearing a life preserver; and as she recognized me in the glare of the lightning, I think a wan little smile crossed her face; at any rate she allowed me to fasten the cork contrivance upon her person, a task I was only too proud to accomplish.

Hardly had it been completed than there arose a fresh volume of shrieks and shouts as the vessel rushed upon the reefs, discernible ahead in the white electric glow that accompanied the almost constant reek of lightning and detonation of thunder. Then came an awful crash, accompanied by the grinding that announced the termination of the old Triton's honorable career upon the high seas.

The scene that followed was maddening, and I suppose it will remain in my mind as long as I live; for while I had taken part in shipwrecks on several occasions, it had never been under similar conditions to these, with half a hundred passengers in hysterics over their approaching doom.

I hovered near the spot where Mary Smith stood, and surely she must have seen me there; for once I saw her actually smile, though it was perhaps but a wretched attempt, for which small blame could be given, considering the fearful conditions that surrounded us. We had been swept off the reef again, and were evidently in a sinking condition. Although it seemed as though no small boat could ever live in that fierce sea, the gallant Captain was bound to do his duty and fight to the very last; and most of us were immediately employed in getting those boats to which we had not been swept away, or beaten into kindling wood, ready for launching.

Only herculean efforts availed in that emergency; and when one of the boats actually got away, loaded with women and children, with a few seamen to work the oars, I counted it as next to a miracle; even then the chances were five to one against the little cockleshell living in that mad maelstrom of angry waters that lashed high in the air and licked their hungry white chops as if in anticipation of a speedy and full meal.

Another boat was gotten ready, though the time seemed fearfully short, and every minute I expected to feel the vessel go down beneath me into this they crowded many of the other passengers; but Mary Smith hung back, I know not why, unless some inward intuition warned her that safety did not lie in that direction; nor could I find it in my heart, somehow, to urge her to enter, since I chanced not to be among the crew selected to guide its destinies.

It was launched through within a hair's breadth of collapsing against the side of the sinking steamer, and with herculean labors the brave fellows handling the oars strove to pull away with the storm that would carry them to leeward; but my heart was in my throat as I saw the last of the boat in the flying spud, and I echoed the cry of horror that fell from the lips of the Captain, for I feared that disaster had overwhelmed the frail craft just then, since we saw her no more, upon the topping waves that seemed to exult in the ruin they were causing.

The last boat had gone! Nothing now remained for those of us still aboard save to trust ourselves to the life preservers we wore, or else lash ourselves to some spar that might buoy us up through the surging waters.

I had thought of just such a situation as this, and even arranged my own plan of action; now that she was left aboard it would have to be amended so as to include two instead of one; but there were plenty of ropes to go round; and surely my sailor instinct would tell me how to apply them to the best advantage.

So I approached the maid, and when I could make myself heard above the deafening clamor assured her that I stood ready to attempt everything that man could do in the face of these overwhelming odds to save her life; she readily consented to let me fasten her to a spar I had meanwhile corralled on the leeward side of the now low deck, and arrange other ropes for my own use.

There was no time to lose, for I could feel the deck quivering under my feet, and knew that the crisis, dreadful as it might be, was upon us; so with a last word of assurance, I tied the knots that fastened my own body to the same spar that held her precious form, and then, realizing that the moment for action had come, managed with a mighty effort to topple the float over the side into the yeasty waters of the China Sea.

CHAPTER III.

A KINDLY FORTUNE.

The last sound I remember hearing was the thrilling shout that arose on board the ill-fated Triton as she heaved her nose out of the water like one taking a farewell to the scenes of a lifetime; and then plunged stem downward into the yawning gulf that opened to receive her, how many of those on board succeeded in resisting the suction that accompanied her disappearance I could not even guess; but never a single head did we see as we fought against the fatal drawing influence ourselves.

There we were, two human beings lashed to a spar, and in the midst of such a maddening churn of waters that it seemed a constant miracle we were not crushed beneath each towering billow that hung above us, white-maned and ferocious; but somehow a kindly fate always seemed to remove us from under before the tons of waters fell, and there were seconds when we managed to regain our breath, lying in the hollow between two waves, as it were.

I do not know just how long we were thus buffeted about between those wild hoses of the sea; it may have been minutes, and again an hour or more could have elapsed since the steamer foundered with those on board, when from the sounds that smote my ears I comprehended the thrilling fact that we were drawing rapidly near land.

The roar of the breakers as they struck against the coutlying reefs gave me this intelligence; and I rejoiced in the fact that one way or another our agony of mind must soon be over; for if Heaven were kind we would soon have gained the harbor through some opening in the reefs; and on the other hand once we struck these barriers our finish must be speedy.

It was not through any effort on my part, but by the favor of the good little angel that sits aloft guiding the destinies of poor Jack, that we actually found ourselves drawn through such an opening; so close were the grim reefs that once I actually thrust out a hand and fended off from their cruel jaws, which seemed determined to snatch my companion from her hold upon the spar. But it was not to be, and we found ourselves floating in a little lagoon, where the foamy waters no longer leaped and tossed like crazy things.

Almost exhausted just before, on account of my unusual exertions to keep from being overwhelmed in the whirlpool, I now seemed to draw in new courage and inspiration; and cutting myself free from the rope that had held me fast I frantically urged the spar toward the low shore, fearful lest some envious tidal current draw us out of that friendly opening again, and cast us to the hungry maw of the raging sea.

Besides, I had become possessed of a deadly fear lest she had succumbed to the fury of the storm; for I could see that her head had fallen low; and indeed, for some minutes I had been watching anxiously for fear lest it might be submerged.

So under my frantic efforts the raft that had brought us safely into a harbor, at last, was driven up in shallow water; then I hastened to cut the bonds that held her, and summoning the last of my exhausted strength I took her in my arms and staggered to the beach, where I fell in a heap. But this was only for a minute, when my courage and strength began to come back.

My first thought was of her. She lay there as though life indeed had departed from that lovely form; and it was with dire misgivings that I pressed my hand over her heart to ascertain whether or no there might be a faint fluttering there. And when I detected it I was wild with delight, rubbing her hands to induce circulation, even pressing my head across her white forehead, where her hair hung in dank profusion, reminding me so much of people I had seen drowned.

And while I thus worked eagerly, murmuring her name from time to time,

there was a fluttering of the eyelids, and after this I saw her looking at me in sheer amazement, as though she could not for her life imagine where she was, or what I of all men could be doing there, kneeling beside her.

I realized that I must indeed look like a forlorn ruffian with my clothes, wet and full of sand, clinging to me in a grotesque way; and since my appearance was apt further to frighten her, I thought it best to retire a little distance, to allow her fully to recover her senses and grasp the significance of the situation confronting us.

She sat up and looked around in bewilderment; but everything must have come back to her mind as she saw the sea toppling over the reefs in the glare of the white lightning's flash, and of course she knew that we had been cast ashore, miraculously saved.

When I saw her imperiously beckon to me I quickly approached, though trying to mask my eagerness in an apparent desire to serve her. As she attempted to rise I put out my hands and assisted her, but there was only the deepest respect in my actions, and no sooner was she on her feet that I immediately took my hands away, lest I seem impertinent, for there was undeniably a gulf existing between this humble sailorman's position and even the one she had occupied as maid to Mrs. Partington.

"Once more you have done me a great service, John Henry," she said, in quivering tones; "and I feel that I even owe my life to your bravery. But for your care I might have been drowned, as so many were. Oh! it is a terrible memory; never can I forget it. But I know we must consider our own peril rather than give way in lamenting those who were lost. Do you know where we are, John Henry?"

Somehow she seemed to believe that to be my whole name, and from the way in which she frequently repeated it the sound could not be altogether disagreeable in her ears.

I assured her that beyond understanding that we were upon some island in the great China Sea, that stretched far down the border of the continent toward Borneo and the Malay Peninsula, I had no definite idea as to what the land might be upon which an opportune fortune had seen fit to cast us.

Other questions she asked me, concerning our chances for finding food and water; but while I attempted to cheer her up, I had secret misgivings as to whether we would be able to exist, though ready to exert my seaman's skill and knowledge to the utmost in order to sustain life.

I did not say anything to her, but secretly my thoughts were anything but pleasant, knowing as I did full well how many of these islands along this perilous coast are reckoned as dens of Chinese pirates, and that the chances were three to one we were fated to come in contact with some of these gentry before we had been long upon our new possessions.

The first thing to be thought of was to better our present condition, if it could be done; fortunately I am a smoker, and always carry a little waterproof matchsafe in my pocket for emergencies, which at this opportune time chanced to be filled with wax vestas.

I saw her glance at it and then at me as though perhaps she imagined there was some incongruity in a common sailor carrying so neat a little contraption; but then Jack never knows what to do with his money, and often invests it in some ridiculous gimcrack that is about as useful to him in his sphere of life as perhaps a fifth wheel would be to a wagon.

When we had passed beyond the outer fringe of trees that served to break the force of the wind, I managed to round up some dry stuff and start a blaze, after which it was easy to keep it going; so there we stood and sat drying out; and it pleased me more than I can say to see that the girl took the situation far better than I had dreamed possible, showing what a sensible little woman she must be to accept the inevitable so philosophically, and feel so thankful over the fact that Heaven and John Henry had managed together to save her life, that she could not complain because things were not just what we might have wished.

As for me, well, I was tickled all over to think of the boundless opportunities that the near future would doubtless open up for me to serve Mary Smith; and the only thing I feared was that she might see me smiling, and be alarmed lest some other motive inspired my eager actions in waiting upon her.

She had a way of holding one at a certain distance that I had mentally commented upon on board the steamer, never dreaming that in a measure it would be applied to me—there was that about her to inspire respect even in one less given to such things than myself; and the more I saw of her attitude, the deeper my wondering admiration became.

Of course I recalled all that I had ever heard or read about shipwrecked parties, and even old Robinson Crusoe came in for a share of my regard; so as we sat there I regaled her with exaggerated accounts of all the wonderful things we would be apt to pick up on the beach on the morrow, cast ashore from the wreck of the old steamer, and which would enable us to survive with comfort until a sail appeared in the offing to take us hence—I even declared that this event must happen in short order, since the island probably lay in the direct course between Hong Kong and the spicy islands of the equator; though I knew full well at the time that this was not so, since the steamer had been driven far out of her course ere striking the fatal reef; but then my object was good, since I saw that her spirits needed buoying up after the recent terrible experience.

Later on the full significance of our wretched plight might dawn upon her gradually, but she would be better able to grapple with the disappointments then; perhaps too, recognizing that my object had only been to save her needless agony of mind in the beginning, she might forgive the deception.

No matter, I must decide what I believed best for both of us, and act accordingly, despite the consequences.

The morning came at last, after a night that neither of us would ever forget, filled with terrors for her; but to me there was solace for all I had suffered in the contemplation of the fact that mainly through my personal efforts had she been brought safely ashore, and that she must depend entirely upon me from this hour forth—I had no regrets for anything that had happened to me, deeply as I mourned the untimely taking-off of those who had been on board the ill-fated liner.

The storm also went down long before morning came, so that as the daylight gave us the opportunity to gaze out seaward we could draw consolation from the fact that the waves were decreasing

Fearing we might have been observed.

with every hour, and a smiling sky looked down on us from above, as though bestowing its silent benediction on our heads—at least, that was the thought that came to me while standing there beside her.

After her garments had dried, and she had managed to twist her abundant hair up in a knot on the top of her shapely little head, so like that of a queen, I found myself in a maze to know why Mary Smith could have ever dyed her abundant locks; for to my amazement, and a bit to her confusion too I fancy, the morning light betrayed the fact that submersion in salty water for hours was more than hair-dye is supposed to stand; for the black had entirely disappeared, and she blossomed out a pure blonde, her blue eyes matching her tresses now to a dot.

I thought it very odd that a young woman could be ashamed of such lovely golden locks; and often pondered over the fact in secret, though never voicing my mystification; nor did she attempt to explain the puzzle, there being other things more serious to occupy our attention in the beginning; and later on doubtless she had other good reasons for keeping silent; but then people who live in glass houses have no right to throw stones, and there were some things connected with my own personal matters that would have to be brought to the front, if so be we came by mutual consent to the confessional.

Of that, more anon.

CHAPTER IV.

I BUILD A FAIRY PALACE.

Despite the horrors of that night we both confessed that we were hungry; and so far as we could see there was nothing to eat; but I immediately cast about, and finding a cocoanut tree upon which clusters of nuts in all stages of growth seemed to be growing, I climbed it with the agility of a monkey, urged to unusual exertions by the consciousness that she was watching me, and also that she had declared herself both thirsty and hungry.

So I threw down many of the nuts, and afterward with my knife cut several of them open, showing her how to satisfy her thirst with the juice they contained, while the meat in its soft state was delicious to our taste.

But more was needed, and I found near by oysters growing as they may seldom be seen outside of these islands in the warm seas; so a number were opened into one of the harder cocoanut shells, and gradually cooked at our fire, which we kept going, since wood was far less valuable than our precious stock of matches. When done the mess was extremely palatable, especially since both of us chanced to be fond of shell fish.

As my companion manifested an inclination to sleep after eating, and I wished to patrol the beach alone, in fear of what I might find there, I made her a cozy nook behind the trees, where she could rest in comfort; and then promising to return as soon as possible, I hoped with cheering news, I left her.

Nor were my fears without some foundation; for presently I came upon a body, one of the sailors, and digging a grave close by I interred the poor fellow, first taking his clothes and hiding them in the bushes, for there could be no telling how valuable they might prove to me in the near future.

Ten minutes later I found some boxes and bales stranded, which I succeeded in rolling or dragging up to a point where they could not be carried out again even with the highest tide; and just beyond I came upon the second unfortunate, this time a passenger, upon whose person I found a purse of money, and an address that was possibly that of his wife; he too was decently interred; but as in the former instance I refused to bury his clothing also, since that could do him no good and might yet prove a godsend to the stranded ones left to battle with adversities.

During that morning walk I thus performed the last sad rites for seven persons, two of whom I regret to say were women passengers aboard the ill-fated boat in which Mary Smith had somehow declined to trust herself, as if guided by some Providential inward monitor.

My spirits had sunk down to a pretty low ebb by the time I had returned to the place where I left my companion; and yet the sight of her sitting at the foot of the palm tree eagerly awaiting me, for she had sighted my coming afar off, caused me to partially throw off this incubus, and I tried for her sake to appear even cheerful; but apparently she had noted my funereal appearance as I approached with bowed head, for she immediately demanded an exact account of all I had seen and done.

It was evident that Mary must have guessed my real mission, and if that were so, why seek to deceive her? So I told of finding the poor victims of the typhoon's rage, and how I had with reverential hands laid them each and all in their last resting-places.

I think she cried somewhat as I went on; for after I had finished my sad recital she smiled up at me through her tears; and I could see what seemed to be a relieved expression crossing her face, as though my manner of telling had done much to take a weight from her mind—perhaps it reassured her with regard to the kind of man whose fortunes had, by this strange decree of fate, become interlocked with her own.

But I had better news to tell her, for I had found many things of value to castaways scattered along the beach, and it already seemed certain that we would not starve to death, no matter if months elapsed before a rescue came.

She insisted on accompanying me to save a portion of the flotsam and jetsam that had washed ashore; nor was I in the least averse to having her company, since it did not seem as though I could ever tire of looking upon her expressive countenance, that seemed so full of inspiration to me.

Accordingly we went forth, a rescue party of two, and long ere noon came we had found a most bountiful harvest in the way of useful things; the beach was strewn with wreckage, perhaps from some other vessel besides our own steamer, much of it spoiled by the combined action of sun and salt water; but here and there we managed to find things that drew out exclamations of delight and satisfaction from both of us.

Coming upon a rusty carpenter's hatchet I felt that it was worth its weight in gold to me under the circumstances; for with it I could not only defend himself against attacks, but at the same time break open the numerous boxes and bales and casks that tantalized us with the mystery of their unknown contents.

I think that if you ran through the list of things old Robinson took ashore on his raft, you would have a pretty fair estimate of the multitude of articles we gathered together in several deposits during that morning jaunt; but I was careful not to take her a foot further than I had already been myself, for fear lest she be shocked by the sight of something grewsome.

But of the things we found that pleased me most was a case of firearms and ammunition; they were inside a heavy metal waterproof covering, which in turn had been sealed up in a wooden box; whether they floated ashore or had been tossed along the bottom of the sea, gradually forced into the lagoon and finally brought up on the beach by a small tidal wave, I could only hazard a guess, nor did I care one iota, it being quite sufficient for me that they were before my ravished eyes after I had pounded off the double cover.

I rubbed a rifle dry at once, and even loaded it with some of the ammunition, wild with delight at my ability to defend Mary Smith against a host of savage Chinese pirates, in case fate forced me against such a hard deal; for up to that moment I had shivered more than a few times as I contemplated how next to powerless I should be in such a case.

After we had cooked a portion of ham, found awaiting our attention on the open beach, as though fine fat pigs grew wild on this island, and smoked their own hind quarters, we gave ourselves up to a contemplation of the situation, and settled upon where we should make our permanent camp.

It must not be far away from the shore, since we meant to keep up a constant watch for the ship that was to rescue us from this lonely island; and as I had noted a fine place near by when looking for water, with a delightful spring close at hand, we called this our present "home."

How beautifully she blushed when I happened to say that word, without meaning anything by it; but as I mentioned before, Mary Smith was a sensible girl, able to look a situation directly in the face, and accept what fortune chose to deal out, without any foolish hesitation—yes, a girl in ten thousand, and with the passage of every hour I found myself more and more in sincere admiration for her abounding sagacity, common sense, and cheery ways; and I was ready to take my soleman affidavit that if a fellow of my stamp had to be wrecked on a lonely isle, with but a single companion, he could never have found one whose sunny nature and good wholesome disposition was calculated to buoy his spirits up than just plain Mary Smith, the lady's maid out of a job, even as I was myself, since my ship had gone to Davy Jones' locker, and for aught I knew the gallant captain with her.

I worked like a Trojan all that afternoon, gathering things around that central zone, and making a little fort of our camp; and she would have continued to assist me but that I refused to work another minute unless she consented to sit down and make thinks look cheery while I continued to "tote" heavy burdens on my broad back, or roll them along the beach as seemed most expedient.

Never had I felt happier in the fact that a kindly Nature, aided and abetted by my own inclinations, had shaped me for an athlete; and that I was capable of accomplishing considerable in the way of stunts; for I really feel bound to confess

(Continued on page thirteen.)

A Mock Marriage

Or, LOVE'S IDIOSYNCRASIES

By ELLA MARTIN

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CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

FERN ALDEN often called upon Lillith, but nothing she could say or do would induce the girl to pose as her brother's wife.

"It would be better to take your proper place in your husband's home, if only to avoid scandal," urged Fern. "It would please father, and lift a part of the worry from your mother's mind."

"If it was merely a matter of pleasing others without humiliating myself, I would be glad to do so. As for mother, she ought to be able to bear all that she has brought upon herself, if I can bear what she has brought upon me," replied the girl, unrelentingly. "One must reap the harvest one has sown."

"But if my brother should return soon, you would come home, surely. The public would simply think itself mistaken, if it ever did believe he had gone for any reason but that given by us. And he can doubtless explain his private reasons to you, Lillith."

"He can tell me nothing that I do not already know, now that my eyes are open. He, as well as myself, was unduly influenced. Our parents are responsible for everything that has happened. I could have loved him, and because of that I can forgive him. But nothing now could induce me to be more than a stranger to Glen Alden.

"As for what will be said by a gossip-loving public, it is too late to consider that now. The dear public has done its thinking, and the story is old. Why set it to thinking anew by endeavoring to change the channel of its thought? To return to my husband's (?) home would only revive comment."

The interview between the two girls invariably ended thus. Fern's heart lay heavy in her bosom. She had trouble of her own, and between her own and her brother's affairs she had little peace of mind. She went the rounds of parties, theaters, and balls in an attempt to keep her time filled, leaving her no chance to worry.

But there were some things she must get at the bottom of, even though the knowledge when obtained might not conduce to her happiness. And as no word came from Glen she was tempted to believe that the fortune-teller might aid her in solving the problem. Therefore, when the stipulated time arrived, she was driven to the street and number Helen had given her. She was surprised to find a large, imposing residence, with several rooms fitted up for the gypsy's accommodation.

Her heart beat a little strangely as she followed the servant down a long, dimly-lighted corridor, and through several draperied doorways. At last she stood in a chamber all aglow with red lights. But not yet had she reached the den of the reader of palms. She felt a creepy sensation as the maid pause and motioned her to enter, between closely-hanging portieres, a small apartment in which a dim light was burning. The walls of this room were hung with bunting of a deep-red color. On a table in the center of the room was set a golden bowl containing a dark liquid, and a ball of polished silver stood on a pedestal close beside it. A few feet from the table was a vacant chair, placed under a canopy of red cloth—the gypsy's throne.

Fern gave an involuntary shudder. She almost wished she had not entered this inner place alone—so weird and unreal it all seemed. She could hardly believe it was a scene of the present day, and in a modern building. She was about to retreat and wait for Helen to join her; but at that very moment a swathed and bent figure advanced from the shadows of a room beyond. Fern started visibly on beholding her, but stood her ground. It was too late now to think of retreat.

She could not discern things clearly in the dim light, but this much she saw—that this person wore a mask, and that the hands were encased in thin rubber gloves. She wondered in a vague way if these precautions were not necessary to protect her face and hands from the liquids she was obliged to use in her necromancy; for she could see there was to be more to the rigmarole than just palm-reading. She felt almost as if she was in bodily danger as the grotesque figure took the canopied seat and motioned for her visitor to approach.

With trembling limbs she advanced, but paused halfway, irresolute, undecided; for she heard the voice of "Helen of Troy" somewhere in the shadows behind her.

"Oh, never mind," she was saying, "if she has already gone in. I will await my turn."

Fern would gladly have withdrawn, but feared that Helen would ridicule her for her cowardice if she weakened now. And, so, feeling like a guilty thing for having shaken her friend, she struggled to free herself from the reluctance she felt, and advanced to the throne of the gypsy queen.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE ADIRONDACKS.

As Glen Alden was to make the trip to the Adirondack Mountains in his sister's interest he straightway proceeded to forget his own affairs, though he was obliged to smother his conscience somewhat in order to do so. The first thing he did on arriving at his destination was to take a deep, long-drawn breath of the bracing air; the next to send a line to Fern telling her he had reached Keene Valley, and was staying at St. Hubert's Inn. He added that he would at once enter into his quest, and would write at length the minute his investigation brought any results. This message Fern never received, it having been lost in transit.

The fact that he did not hear from Fern in answer to his hastily-written letter did not worry him a particle. He was having the time of his life, hunting and fishing with new acquaintances whom he met at his hotel. A few of the guests he had run across before, but had forgotten their very existence until their paths crossed his again here in the heart of the mountains. Among these was a young man named Ed Huntley. The two became chums at once. And Glen's time was so taken up with outdoor sports that three weeks had elapsed before he awoke to the fact that he must be about his sister's business. Then he sent her another hastily-written message, but omitted, quite inadvertently, to give his address. It never occurred to him that his people were likely to want to communicate with him. It was pure thoughtlessness on his part—a trait not foreign to young men of wealth and leisure.

One night as he and Huntley sat by a campfire a few miles from the hotel—though not far enough to make a guide necessary—another of Glen's transient acquaintances came upon them from the woods beyond. The month was June, and a fire was not a necessity except for cooking purposes, unless it was to add a more cheerful aspect to their quarters. The man who came upon them thus suddenly was well known to Ed Huntley, who at once introduced him to Glen. It was then they both discovered that they had met before, like "ships that pass in the night," as the newcomer, James Collier, quoted.

And there by the campfire, as it blazed cheerfully, sending numerous sparks aloft into the balmy air of the night, the three began reminiscences for their general entertainment.

There was nothing particularly clever or shrewd about Glen Alden—he was just an ordinarily bright young man; but he discerned on the spot that the opportunity to do the investigating Fern had mapped out for him was at hand. For Jim Collier was the name given his sister by "Helen of Troy" as the one who could enlighten her as to whom she had unwittingly married one night at the club-rooms of the Jolly Girls. He must make the most of the chance thus presented, but how to go about it was the question. How was he to get the desired information from this man without seeming to seek for it?

He sat thoughtful for a space, while he looked away from his companions toward the forest of pine and hemlock that rose as a background against the star-gemmed sky, and chewed absent-mindedly at the end of his unlighted cigar. He was supposed to be listening to an anecdote related by the newcomer, who was recently from Chicago, and he did hear enough of it to enable him to take advantage of the opportunity it gave him to investigate his sister's claim upon this man's cousin, though it was a claim obnoxious to her. He had all along believed that Jim Collier was the man himself, and not merely a cousin, as Helen had said, who knew where the real bridegroom could be found.

"And what have the members of the Jolly Boys' Club been up to since I left?" he asked, as a wedge-like opening to the subject.

James Collier removed the cigar from between his teeth, and with apparent nervousness began stroking the dark mustache that adorned his upper lip. But he looked at Glen Alden quizzically, and brushed the ash from the end of his cigar before replying; and then, Yankee fashion, he answered by asking another question.

"Were you a member of that ridiculous society?"

Glen evaded a direct reply in much the same manner as the other.

"Is that your opinion of the club? Well, some ridiculous things have happened there. It is certainly all that its name would seem to imply—its members are extremely jolly. Were you in attendance at its sister organization when the mock marriage took place? I hear the escapade has led to complications not altogether agreeable."

He was watching Collier's face keenly, though covertly, but there was no change of countenance by which he could judge whether this man realized the seriousness of the affair under discussion. Jim merely threw back his head and laughed.

"Well, I rather think I was there!" he cried. "Why, I just missed being the bridegroom—or the bride, rather—by a hair's breadth—I should say a few minutes."

"You are getting rather excited, aren't you?" queried Ed, with a grin, though he hadn't much of an idea what they were talking about.

"Well, I'm getting things mixed, I'll own. But it was a mixed-up affair, so no wonder."

Glen was fairly gasping in astonishment. If not this man, who then? It appeared as if he was as far from gaining the information he desired as ever. In his eagerness to learn more he leaned forward slightly.

"You don't mean it?"

"Indeed I do. You see it was all the work of that mischievous madcap, Helen of Troy."

For the second time Ed Huntley put in a word. It was an ejaculation: "Helen of Troy!"

"Yes; she dubbed herself that in the first place as a satire on her looks; after that the other girls seldom called her anything else. However she isn't as much their inferior in personal beauty as she seems to think, and her cleverness and vivacious spirits render her really charming."

"And was she one of the participants in that make-believe marriage?" asked Glen, by way of putting Collier back on the right track.

"Oh, no! she was only the instigator of everything. All the deviltry was hatched up by that same Helen; and like Satan himself she was never idle, though as a rule there was little harm in what she planned and executed. I was not a member of the club, but I had known Helen Bliss for some time. She coaxed me to consent to her plans that night; she wanted me, she said, just because I was not a member, that she might surprise the others. She wanted to keep from them the identity of the two who took part in the sham ceremony, she told me. I myself was never to know the name of my partner in the play."

Glen scarcely breathed, lest something should occur to break the narrative before he could learn the name of the man in the case. It was Huntley who asked:

"How did you escape being in the mix-up?"

"It happened that I was just a few minutes behind time. Fancy being late at one's own wedding! You see Helen was to dress me up in woman's toggery, while the lady was to appear in male attire. In short the bride was to act as the bridegroom, and vice versa. Well, as I was about to say, a cousin of mine who had just touched Chicago that day, and had been induced to attend the union of the two clubs by one of the boys, arrived on the scene at the very instant I was due to appear. We look considerably alike, and Helen who had met him during the day mistook him for me; and by the time he had convinced her that he was the wrong man, she had convinced him that he would do as well—that I was late, and might not come at all, in which event her plans for the evening's entertainment would be upset. The company was waiting, she urged, and so, under a sacred promise to keep the secret of his identity, she finally persuaded him to accede to her wishes."

"And did she keep her promise?" asked Glen.

"Yes, it was my cousin himself who told the story to me. But he has never learned who his bride of the hour was. She had promised to keep that a secret, also, she told him, when he asked her about it. And of course the bridal couple were disguised and masked, as were all the company, so that no one could find out who they were by looking around to see who were missing from among them."

"There is no way to trace the matter to the right parties except through Helen, who alone holds the secret, I suppose," Glen said as casually as he could.

The tension on his nerves had relaxed when Jim named his cousin as the man who had masqueraded as the bride. Now he had only to learn the name of this cousin, and find out in what light he regarded the alleged union. Failing that, he was as far from the root of the matter as ever. Something prompted him to say, or rather to ask:

"Did neither of them mistrust that the marriage was a legal one?"

"No, certainly not."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Huntley.

"At any rate the knot was tied by a justice of the peace, himself a member of the masculine auxiliary of the club, whether the madcap Helen was aware of it or not. No one can be certain as to that."

"But of course such a marriage could not be binding; and as neither knows who the other was, if Helen kept her promise of secrecy, it does not matter."

"But the lady in the case knows a justice officiated, though she is ignorant of her partner's name. You must remember that in a case like this fictitious names as well as disguises make no difference. It is the two people who are joined in wedlock, not the names nor the apparel. At least, so certain attorneys hold."

"It wouldn't be difficult, I imagine, to get a marriage like that set aside," ventured Ed Huntley, who had risen to put more sticks onto the fire.

"No," replied Glen, "not if the lady knew whom to seek freedom from. It was a marriage of hands, not of hearts, and was done in idle thoughtlessness for play. If any one gave the matter a serious thought, it was Helen Bliss, who planned it; and so far as her associates know, she never thinks of anything but mischief. But this young lady who permitted herself to be wheedled into a mock marriage to furnish entertainment for others is in love with another, and has been obliged to send him from her, because she has learned that she is not free to wed until she is legally separated from the man whom she married for fun. Of course, she does not care to explain this to her lover, and he considers himself rejected, and perhaps will never renew his suit."

"That is a pack of trouble, to be sure!" exclaimed Huntley, as he let a great dry limb fall upon the fire, nearly smothering the blaze, for a minute. It flared up again, however, more brightly than before, leaping from branch to branch of the dry limb, and lighting up the rugged, mossy ground on which the other two were stretched out at full length. "Listen!" he added. "Was that a sound of footsteps, or the crackling of twigs under the feet of some wild animal?"

All three assumed a listening attitude, but no one was able to decide as to the nature of the sounds.

"An animal, most likely," they finally concluded; "a belated hunter would have made us a call, if he were at all socially inclined."

"Well, let's turn in, boys, before some benighted traveler who is socially inclined seeks shelter among us rather than trudge on to the hotel in the darkness. We have no spare room in our mansion of duck. We can just chuck Jim in a corner any old place, and kick him out entirely if he snores."

"Is that the sort of hospitality this region extends to stray travelers?" asked Collier, laughing.

"It is the kind we extend; we don't know about the rest of the region," Glen replied promptly. "We have adopted a method of entertainment of our own, viz., snore, and out you go, head first."

Collier was about to reply, but at that moment a large bird dog darted across the open space in the glare of the firelight.

"Oh, so it was a man instead of a wild animal who passed us by!" he exclaimed. "His dog has been nosing around, and has here taken up his master's trail."

They were at the door of the tent by this time, and no further remark was passed on the incident. His companions began discussing something else, but Glen remained silent.

"I shall know that dog when I see it again," he thought. "I have my suspicions why that lone hunter changed his mind about making us a call. He overheard enough of our conversation to turn him from his purpose."

He was rather silent all the while they were preparing to turn in, but neither of the others noticed it, for they were speaking of matters they knew were of no interest to him. It was a long time before he settled himself to slumber. At first his companions talked after retiring; he answered when spoken to, but heard little of what was being said.

After a time silence settled down upon them. And what is there so big as silence, especially in the night-time? Glen heard the heavy breathing of the two at the other side of the tent; for in spite of what he had said he had insisted on bunking separately, and he felt himself alone. How big the universe seemed! He began to feel his own littleness. He lay awake a long time, listening to the soughing of the pines as the wind swept across the mountainside. He was nearer to Nature's heart than he had ever been before, and it impressed him more than he would have believed it could. He could see the dark blue of the sky, with its myriads of stars, and the moon looking down at him through the open tent-flaps.

Presently, he left his improvised couch and went noiselessly out into the open air, where he stood and took long breaths, filling his lungs with the oxygen it contained. He gazed around on the thickets and open, both alike bathed in moonlight, and forgot for a time the two men asleep inside the tent. It seemed to him he was in the depths of the mountain forest alone with Nature and his God. And thus realizing the immensity of the heavens and the earth, he felt the littleness of his own individuality.

He crept back at length to the shelter of the canvas and turned his face from the opening. He was alone once more—alone in spirit, at least, with the expanse

of blue sky shut out—and the world seemed not half so large. He had a better opinion of himself with the view of Nature cut off; at least he did not feel the almost nothingness of his own existence. But here in the heart of the woods and the silence of the night he did what he had never thought to do before: he looked within and became acquainted with his own soul. And from seeing himself as he really was, he became dissatisfied with some parts of his past life. Hitherto he had been unthinking and unmindful of responsibility, but now he came to see the enormity of his conduct toward the girl he had married and separated from—he had not looked upon it as desertion before. And in proportion to the light given him on his conduct he saw the innocence and guilelessness of his deserted bride. He beheld her in his mind's eyes as an instrument in the hands of a masterful and designing parent, and less responsible than himself, who was also unduly influenced; for it was more than likely that Lillith was not taken wholly into her mother's confidence.

What if she had loved him, after all? What a villain he had been! Could he ever atone? Would she not scorn him, even had he the temerity to approach her to seek forgiveness. More than ever, as her innocence became apparent, did he see her sweetness and beauty. But even while indulging in extenuating thoughts of the girl he had made his bride, his mind with a sudden turn flew to thoughts of her sister Gloria. It was a shock to him to find he had not forgotten her, but he found his lips smiling in the darkness because of the vision thus conjured.

Since the day of the wedding he had denied himself all thoughts of Gloria Bennett. He had a standard to live up to, and even though he had left behind th girl whom he believed cared only for social position, he denied himself, as he believed a married man should, all thoughts of another woman, and in adhering to this principle he expected to tear his preference for Gloria out of his heart. It was better for both—one should not waste one's youth moaning over a hopeless love. And now the personality of this woman had again come between him and his duty—reaching forth, as it were, a restraining hand, just as she had done in his dream, before he ever saw her.

He fell asleep at last only to dream, as on that other night, that Gloria Bennett had come for him, and as before, she claimed him for her own.

It was two days later when he and Ed Huntley pulled up stakes and went back to the inn. Their game bags were filled, and they were tired enough to idle away a day or so on the cool piazzas of St. Hubert's, talking over their hunt and planning a fishing trip on Lake Placid. James Collier, their guest of the night, had left them at dawn, as his road lay in another direction.

It appeared strange to Glen Alden that their paths should cross again just for a length of time sufficient for him to learn that Jim Collier was not the man he had come to seek. If he could only have learned the name of this cousin! But he was convinced that the name was purposely omitted from mention, and therefore he had not asked it.

It was late in the afternoon when he, with Ed Huntley, had reached the hotel—a picturesque, but up-to-date building, large enough to accommodate over a hundred guests. He went directly to his room, where he bathed and got into civilized attire, as he expressed it, before going out onto the veranda. He had been thinking of Lillith, and wondering how she would receive him if he should make up his mind to go back and seek a reconciliation. But as he neared the end of the vine-wreathed piazza, thoughts of his bride were startled out of his head, for the first person he beheld was Max Folsom, his sister's lover, and fawning upon him as a canine fawns only upon his master, was the magnificent bird dog that darted across their camp-ground two nights before.

"Ah, so that is who the belated hunter was!" he muttered beneath his breath. "But why did he not make his presence known? He must have recognized me, and overhearing the conversation, guessed the identity of the bride in that mock marriage."

The fact that Max was here was evidence, if not proof, that he had renounced Fern forever and taken his way to the wilds to forget her. For of course she could not give him her promise to wed him while she was hampered by the technicalities of that unintentional marriage; and he had no doubt considered himself dismissed.

Glen sighed heavily and turned away before Max should chance to look his way and discover his proximity. He regretted not having pressed Collier for the name of the man who stood between his sister and Max Folsom. He let the chance slip because he believed Jim to be concealing the name, and that he would not have obtained the coveted information had he asked for it.

But stay! Max was lately from Chicago, and quite apt to know Jim and the cousin also. He would question him. Once he knew the man's name, he would search him out and settle the matter. He turned back and followed Max to the farther end of the long veranda. But he was brought to a sudden pause by the scene before him, his heart pounding against his breast. For there—not six feet from him—smiling up into Max Folsom's eager face, sat his young bride's sister and rival—Gloria Bennett!

CHAPTER VIII.

FERN ALDEN'S FORTUNE.

Tremblingly Fern Alden stood at the foot of the gypsy's throne and held out her hand to the bent, masked figure before her. Her timidity was because she had heard Helen's voice behind her, and feared intrusion from her, instead of any dread of the tawdrily-attired figure of the old hag, or of the words she would mumble over her palm.

There was a short silence, then a squeaky voice startled her by saying:

"Before I can read your palm you must gaze at the silver globe until your mind is as near a blank as it is possible for you to make it. Concentrate your thoughts on the one object, and soon you will attain the desired result."

Fern wondered at the language used by the woman; it was not the disjointed mumble she had expected to hear.

"Think of nothing whatever," now commanded the gypsy, "and then your mind will be under my control and I can read it."

Fern had obeyed the first part of her instructions, she was gazing at the globe; but her mind was active. She had no notion of concentrating her mind on nothing, as she was told, that she might become self-hypnotized. In facing the globe she must turn her back to the throne, and so to be quite sure she

"Ask him what he knows!"

should not become hypnotized by steady gazing at the highly-polished ball, she deliberately shut her eyes and thought of everything imaginable. It was all a fake, anyway. She was not going to believe one word the gypsy told her, so why not retaliate by fooling the humbug? She almost jumped when she heard the voice behind her say:

"Open your eyes and throw yourself into this thing! Do as I bid you, gaze at the ball of silver, or I can tell you only that which I read in your palm."

This Fern had no intention of doing, but her faith in the gypsy's ability was increased. If she could know that the girl's eyes were closed while her back only was visible to her, she must possess in some degree a supernatural power.

Without a word, and ever mindful of the fact that Helen was waiting outside the den of mysery, Fern turned and held out her palm for inspection, a silent protest against the globe-gazing. The light was so dim the gypsy was obliged to hold the outstretched hand close to her eyes. After a period of painful silence she said:

"I see by the lines in your hand that you are a married woman."

Fern was startled into drawing the telltale member away. She shivered as with cold. How could such information be gained by gazing at her palm?

"But what troubles you most," the squeaky voice went on, "is that you do not know to whom you are bound, nor where your liege lord is keeping himself."

"Where is he to be found?" Fern whispered, eagerly, breathlessly—lest Helen should be near at hand, waiting, and overhear. "If you know so much you can tell me more."

"Wait!" crooned the hag, "wait!" She scanned the palm more closely, numbling words beneath her breath.

"Yes, yes!" she said, finally; "there is more to tell. He is somewhere in the Adirondack Mountains—first one place and then another. And," she lowered her voice impressively, "so is your lover!"

Again Fern was startled, but she allowed the strange being to retain her hand, while she bent forward eagerly, forgetful that she came to this place prepared to disbelieve all that was told her. For had not the fortune-teller revealed things impossible for her to know except through this art of palmistry?

"His name?" she breathed. "Tell me his name!"

A moment of dead silence, then two words pregnant with emphasis fell from the lips behind the mask.

"Jim Collier!"

"Good heavens!"

Fern Alden fell back a step or two, dazed into forgetfulness of everything but the import of that name. Jim Collier was a many-times rejected lover. She had refused his attentions, not because she did not esteem and respect him, but because she loved another. But he was a most persistent suitor. He had sworn to possess her by some means, and if he had been her partner in that mock marriage there was no way to extricate herself from the hateful bondage. He would never free her that she might marry another.

It was evident he was not aware of the power he had over her; he could know nothing of the one who stood by his side that night, or that technically they were married, or he would have claimed her before this time. And to think that she had sent Glen to search for him, the man involved in that farce, that arrangements might be made to make her free! If Glen should succeed in his efforts to find him, and should betray the truth, it would only serve to draw the fetters still closer about her. Jim would never release her, even though he could not claim her himself.

A tightening of the throat seized her at this despairing thought, and her hand flew to her heart, clutching at the laces on her breast. The eyes of the gypsy were watching her through the narrow slits in the mask—dark, beady eyes, they seemed to be; but of course it was impossible to tell their color in the dusk of the room. Her head had grown dizzy with horror. Better if it had been a stranger, as Helen had led her to believe, when she wheedled her into consenting to her plan, for then she could have arranged the matter without trouble. Oh, if Glen would only advise her of his whereabouts, that she might countermand the instructions she had given him. Jim had sworn never to give up hope, and if Glen, in trying to learn who the man in the case was, and his real attitude in the matter, should betray the real state of things, all was lost!

She would give worlds now to recall Glen from the mission she had sent him on. Was this her punishment for thinking more of her own affairs than of her brother's? She had not even advised him as to the course he ought to pursue in the matter of his marriage. It was possible she might have influenced him to remain and act out his part to the world; and maybe later all would have been well between them. They might have learned to love each other. Who knows? She had thought little about what was likely to be Lillith's position or her attitude in the matter; but now, since she had seen how things turned out, she would gladly have recalled her brother for all of their sakes.

Besides her fear that Glen, while interviewing Jim Collier, might unwittingly enlighten him concerning things he was sure to be ignorant of, if Helen's word could be depended on, she had now a sisterly feeling toward her brother's wife, and would have liked to bring them together. She longed for the opportunity to intercede for her—to plead her cause, though knowing her intervention would not be appreciated by Lillith.

How would it be, she thought wildly, to forget the little incident of the marriage-play, since Jim did not know there was a question of legality involved, and recall Max Folsom, and keep her secret forever. Helen Bliss had told her that Jim Collier knew where to find the man who took part in that night's mimicry, and now the teller of fortunes, the august reader of palms, had declared that Jim was himself the man. If such was the case he did not know—and it was probable he never would know—the whole truth about the matter, else he would assuredly have claimed her before this. If ever he learned the facts he could not be sure that she even guessed it to be anything but the joke it was intended for. And it was such a little thing to stand between her and her love.

All this passed through her mind in a twinkling, but without coming to a decision as to her future course of action, she reached forth her hand again and said:

"Go on, please!"

"There is no more to be learned from your palm, lady. I must consult the pool; your future lies there. Sit down, and do not move or speak."

A wave from a hand that just peeped out of a long, flowing sleeve of scarlet, indicated a low seat near the table on which stood the bowl of liquid. Then the figure, with its load of cheap jewelry, limped from the crimson-cushioned throne to the little table and bent over the inky-black liquid with numbled words of invocation. She stirred the contents of the bowl with a wooden ladle, then waited until the surface became smooth and still. Fern was growing nervous with the delay. Helen, she believed, was waiting outside the room; would she grow impatient and intrude before the fortune-teller had made known all that she was able to tell?

Presently the gypsy broke the silence in a voice a trifle less squeaky, it seemed to Fern.

"I see a courtroom," she said impressively. "The Judge at his bench hands a paper to a woman who stands waiting. The document is a divorce decree! The woman is you!"

The words were clear, startling! Fern gasped and sank back limp in her chair. The woman seemed not to notice her agitation! A divorce! her father's pet aversion! And it was she who received it! She an Alden! The disgrace would overwhelm him; he would bow his head in shame on her account. It must not be!

But stay! it might be only papers that brought her freedom from the tie that bound her legally, but not morally, to—whom? Ah, that was the mystery! But it must have been solved, or the separation could not have taken place. The divorce was a mere matter of form, of course, as the marriage had been. And the proceedings as well as the event that made them necessary could be kept a secret.

"There is a man—two men—in the background," went on the woman, "Jim Collier and Max Folsom!"

Fern sprang to her feet, leaning toward the sorceress, forgetful of the doubts she had entertained in the beginning.

"Which one?" she gasped. "Which one divorced me?"

So real had been the enchantress' description that the scene appeared to be enacted then and there before her eyes. She had lost herself completely in the other's personality.

The gypsy motioned her to be seated. "Wait!" she said.

She stirred the liquid again, and again waited for it to become calm. Fern felt as if her hair must be turning gray with the suspense.

"I cannot tell," she declared, finally. "Both men are there—they are waiting."

"And then——" prompted Fern.

"Then they turn and leave the courtroom together. You are alone with the legal document in your hand. You gaze wistfully after the retreating figures. Then in a passion you tear the paper into infinitesimal pieces and scatter them upon the floor."

With that she withdrew to the seat beneath the scarlet canopy and waited. Fern, with bowed head, was thinking. She had forgotten Helen entirely. It was strange that this personage who could tell so much could not make known to her that which she wished so much to know. She had gone so far as to mention names, something fortune-tellers were not supposed to do. She had reached her limit just in the most interesting part. Was it Max who divorced her when he learned that Jim Collier was, by a trick of Fate, her lawful husband? No; in the scene revealed to the gypsy in the pool the paper was handed over the judge's bench to the woman—herself. It was she who obtained the divorce, and it could be from none other than Jim Collier. But the two went out together and left her! Ah, there could be but one definition to that—Max had renounced her at the very moment of her freedom.

She raised her head, and a new dignity, born of the sudden resolution she had taken, made her appear taller and more mature. Fern Alden was no longer a girl; she had come into her heritage of womanhood at that moment.

"I will foil Fate!" she cried. "Never will I be a divorcee! I will remain single all the days of my life! You are a fake! You have foretold a future that can never come true!"

"She gazed at the gypsy to find that individual regarding her keenly.

"Will you gaze on the crystal now?" she asked, ignoring our heroine's outburst. "Only by that means can I tell you how to avert the fate the pool reveals."

Fern hesitated. She had not intended to, but since this person knew so much of her affairs she might be able to tell her things she could learn in no other way. One moment and she had turned toward the silver globe. But her gaze wandered, and lo! she found herself looking directly into the eyes of the gypsy-queen who was still seated on the throne behind her. On the opposite wall was a mirror cunningly draped in a way to partially hide its presence there; and in its depths their eyes met.

So this was how the old gypsy knew she had closed her eyes instead of fastening a self-hypnotic gaze on the ball of silvery whiteness. By this means she had been spying upon her. Like a shot she turned and faced her.

"You are a fraud!" she cried. "The game is up! Now, stop faking, and tell me how you know Jim Collier and Max Folsom are in the Adirondacks."

Far from being nonplused, the woman answered tantalizingly:

"Because I sent them both there—where their fortunes awaited them. The pool foretold it. Each had a purpose in going, each was in quest of information only to be obtained by a visit to the heart of the Adirondacks. You also would find what you are seeking there."

Again Fern was astonished at the knowledge of her affairs the gypsy displayed. It was true she was seeking, through the agency of her brother, the man from whom she wished to obtain freedom from ties of which he was ignorant. But what did the gypsy know of this?

"There is also another whose future, read from her palm, induced her to seek the bracing atmosphere of the mountains," volunteered the woman.

"Gloria Bennett!" exclaimed Fern. "You sent her there—you!"

At this juncture a suspicion crossed Fern Alden's mind—a glimmering of the truth; and like a flash she sprang toward the recumbent figure in the chair, clutching at the crimson swathings about the head, with the intention of unmasking the features they concealed. But the other divined her purpose in time to frustrate it, likely because she was on the lookout for just that sort of demonstration. She darted from her seat with an agility unlooked for in one of her supposed years, leaving a fringed scarf of glowing scarlet in Fern Alden's grasp. And in the twinkling of a moment the aperture through which she vanished closed behind her.

Fern investigated and found that sliding doors provided with self-locks had shut off further pursuit. There was nothing left for her but retreat. She was a little bewildered when she came to try to find her way out; but at last she ran across a maid who showed her to the front door. And not until she was in her carriage did she remember Helen, and that they had agreed to visit the fortune-teller together. Then, chancing to look back, she beheld that individual standing in the doorway beckoning to her. She waved her hand in reply, but did not order the coachman to stop.

"She should have been where I could see her," she said, in self-excuse. "I don't care what she thinks; but for her I wouldn't have been so foolish as to come here.

"I wonder if it is true that Gloria has gone where she is likely to meet Glen. If so, does she mean to win him from her sister despite her assertion to the contrary? She is proud and spirited; but love will level pride and subdue spirit. Lillith is proud, also, but it is not a pride that would hinder her from seeking a decree of separation from my brother, if her mother would permit it, and her mother's influence might not be able to restrain her, if she should learn to love another. I will go to see Lillith on the morrow; something must be done to lift the worry from my father's mind."

She retired after a visit to Mr. Alden's rooms. He was sleeping and she did not awaken him.

On the following day she called on her sister-in-law, as she had intended. She was received with cool politeness; for intuition warned Lillith why she had come.

"You will be seated?" her hostess asked, in a voice that showed she expected or hoped for a refusal.

"Lillith!" said Fern, warmly, reaching her hand toward the young and beautiful creature, "you are my sister! Why cannot we be friends? I am not to blame for my brother's absence. I did not try to prevent his going, 'tis true. But I thought then, as did Glen, that you would rather it would be so."

"Is a bride apt to desire desertion on her wedding day? Does she crave humiliation and the pity of the public? I have no feeling of resentment now toward any one. I understand at last that Glen knew the marriage to be an arrangement between our parents for our mutual benefit. I could have loved him, but now the best I can do is to try to excuse his conduct toward me? There is no question of forgiveness; no wrong was intended. But it is too late now to patch the matter up. I refuse to consider myself his wife. It was a joining of hands, not of hearts."

"But the law has made you his wife."

"It seemed impossible to Fern that Lillith could deny her union with Glen, when she felt herself bound by that mere semblance of marriage.

"The law can make two people husband and wife only in the sight of the law. Before Heaven and my own conscience I am free."

She looked very pure and innocent when she said it. But a nameless fear clutched at Fern's heartstrings. Was Lillith in danger of falling a victim to her own false reasoning? She had heard that the young bride received attentions from another man as if no tie of wedlock bound her. Did she already love another, and was there danger to her in that love? She never dreamed that the man was Max Folsom.

"Oh, if she could only get word to Glen, she would bring him home by some means—any excuse she could concoct that was plausible enough to fetch him back again. But her letters to him remained unanswered.

"But you are not free to wed again," Fern ventured, her voice gentle but firm.

"Not yet," Lillith answered; "but I am free to love elsewhere. That is what I mean by being free in the sight of Heaven and my own conscience. And the law will make my freedom complete when I desire it!" and the violet-hued eyes flashed resolutely.

Truly she had plenty of spirit, though she looked, with her fair face and pale-gold hair, like an angel.

"Not that! not divorce, Lillith. You do not mean it. Divorce is terrible! My father says so."

"How does your father know?" And Lillith looked at her with penetrating eyes.

"It is a premonition, I think, of what his children are coming to. At least he fears it is what will come to you and Glen," replied Fern, weakly.

She went over to Lillith and drew her down on a couch beside her.

"Don't think of it, dear," she coaxed; "not for a moment. The disgrace—the talk it would invoke would ruin your happiness; it would spoil your career."

"My career is already ruined. As to gossip, my private affairs have been discussed until it is an old story. I have only to think of my happiness now."

"You will not be happy, Lillith, if you take this position. Father says divorce is the devil's doings."

Exasperated, Lillith sprang to her feet and flung the clinging hands aside.

"Your father does well to teach such fine sentiments to his children!" she cried, standing erect and scornful.

Fern also rose to her feet, and the two beautiful women regarded each other in silence for a time. It was a tableau that would appeal to the eyes of a connoisseur. The rich furnishings of the spacious boudoir were a fitting background to this picture of health and beauty.

Fern, offended and grieved, at last moved toward the door. She did not understand the attitude her brother's wife had taken, nor sympathize with it. But she turned to say a word of parting and surprised a sneer on the lips that by reason of their beauty should have known naught but smiles of sweetness.

"Your father knows whereof he speaks," Lillith added, relentlessly, a reckless feeling getting the better of her gentle nature. "Ask him what he knows about the wretchedness of the institution he denounces!"

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The Disappearing Gold

Or, Jack Spence, Detective-Reporter

By George T. Hargreaves

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CHAPTER V.

THE DISCOVERED HOARD.

As I stood close to the ladder by which I had fled into this cavernous retreat, afraid to move for fear of striking something and making a noise that would lead to my discovery, I thought I blamed hard. What was the need of a trapdoor in a mansion of this kind? And why hide it away behind a huge piano? And what about that workshop above stairs with the diamond bracelet and the defaced name inside of it?

I found myself wishing for a revolver. I'm pretty strong for this intuition thing. It kept driving in on me that I was going to need some kind of a trusty weapon before I got out of this affair. To be sure, I had the chisel and the screw-driver in my pocket, but I began to wish for something that I wouldn't have to get into a hand-to-hand struggle in order to use.

Then I set my ears to listen again. I heard a subdued murmur of voices overhead, the movement of feet, and then the closing of an outer door. Almost immediately the automobile began to chug again. But instead of being driven into the garage, it backed and advanced and then crunched smartly through the snow and out the gate into the road. I could faintly hear the increasing throb of its engine as it sped away.

I breathed freer for a bit then. I decided that Hawthorne and his daughter had started away on another ride, and that I could now conclude my search of the house and get away without discovery. I was on the point of striking a light when the soft creon of a sweet voice from above halted me. I wasn't alone after all.

Then I heard a light step, and in a moment the piano gave forth the tender notes of "Annie Laurie." I'm not much on music, but when that voice started in to sing the old song, I just stood unconcerned and entertained until the last word sank softly away.

"Well, she may be off in the head, as the grocer's boy hints," I thought, "but she's certainly all right in the throat."

Then she sang other songs, all of the old-fashioned kind—none of this freak ragtime stuff. I didn't listen to all of them. Instead I made an inspection of my prison. Carefully striking a match as her voice boomed good and strong, I made every instant of its light count.

I was in a basement room, running evidently the width of the house, but not more than ten feet deep. It was entirely cut off from the rest of the basement, a solid brick wall intervening without an opening of any kind. Nor was there window in front or side walls. An iron grating, not more than six inches square, furnished what little ventilation the place had.

As the light died out I noted at one end of the room a rumpled bed of old carpets, as for a dog. At the other end stood a case of steel, holding a series of drawers like a filing cabinet. With my fingers pressing their way along the chill wall, I slowly moved to a closer examination of this odd piece of furniture stuck away in a blind cellar-room reached only by a concealed trapdoor. Oh, I was a busy thinker just about then, believe me. And what I thought about old Hawthorne wasn't safe to print—unless I could prove it, and that was what I was here for—the proof.

The voice above being still busy, I struck another match. In the wavering light I tried one after another of the drawers in the case. They were all fastened except a bottom one, which I found contained a spirit lamp and a few common tools—a hammer, a screw-driver, and a wedge.

I made haste to light the lamp and give the case a closer inspection. It had been made in sections, for the case as it stood never could have been got through the only entrance to this basement room—the trapdoor. It was securely constructed, evidently of steel. A key appeared necessary to open the various locked drawers, for their faces were perfectly smooth, with the keyhole, thin and long, sunk in their middle. There was no knob or catch by which I could get any purchase to try to force them open. Yet, I decided with myself not to leave this vault until I learned the mystery in this underground repository.

I found a way to do it, too. I drew the drawer of tools entirely clear of the case and set it to one side upon the cemented floor. Then I got down upon my knees, drew out the screw-driver I had purloined from the garage, and stretching my arm in, inserted the point of it behind the drawer just above the one I had removed.

But, try as I might, I could not budge the drawer. I reinforced the screw-driver with the chisel, and when I applied my strength I imagined that I could hear the lock grate and the front of the drawer jerk slightly. Once more I reinforced my makeshift lever, this time with the wedge taken from the tool box I had removed.

Waiting for a fortissimo note on the piano overhead, I braced my shoulder and pulled with all my might. There was a faint creak, a snap and then the drawer against which I leaned jerked smoothly out an inch or two.

I grinned with satisfaction as I drew it out farther, and then picked up the lamp and held it that I might see better within. I had no notion of what I was going to find. I was rather set for a surprise. But I wasn't quite geared up to the real discovery.

Removing a cover of thick chamois skin. I breathed hard and my eyes sort of popped as I beheld carefully arranged on a bed of softest cotton the most wonderful collection of pearls I ever saw. They were of all sizes—in shades from almost a vivid yellow down through layers of cream to a lustrous white. And in the very middle lay a row of shimmering black ones, almost the size of hazelnuts.

Forgetting all my newspaper training, I neglected to count them, but I guessed there must have been at least two hundred of the pearls—and every one of them evidently a carefully selected stone. I recall that I knew enough of their value to estimate that, turned into cash, they would have kept me three or four years without work—and I'm a three-thousand-dollar-a-year liver.

A thousand-dollar diamond bracelet

I beheld the most wonderful collection of pearls.

above stairs and ten thousand dollars' worth of pearls below stairs set my upper works to revolving rapidly again. What kind of a geezer was this man Hawthorne, anyway? And how much did that petite daughter of his know of all this? I'll admit I felt rather foolish about that girl, although I had never seen her face. But the old intuition told me that a girl with as graceful and dainty a figure as she must have a becoming face.

I lifted out the drawer of pearls and laid it atop the drawer of tools. Then I attacked the drawer above the pearls. I'd got the knack of the job now and this one came out easier than the first. Its contents furnished me with another surprise.

A tier of canvas bags lay in the bottom. Five of them I counted. They were tied with strong twine and the knot oddly sealed with red wax. I pushed in the side of one of the bags and felt a round hard substance and heard a distinct clink. I guessed it right the first time. Those well-filled bags held gold coins. I've never had a very intimate acquaintance with gold coins, but I knew enough to tell me that these were all of the same size and that they were all eagles—ten-dollar pieces.

I lifted one of the bags out to guess its weight. The motion jarred the coins within. I didn't think they made noise enough to be heard at a distance, but anyway the music overhead ceased very abruptly. It was just as if the girl had been disturbed and was listening.

That was the first and only time I ever got tired of holding money. I had to keep the bag practically motionless in the air, because each time I moved it the slightest that jingle began, and I didn't want to frighten that young woman.

My arm was about ready to crack under the load when I heard her soft tread cross the floor into another room. Then I hastened to lower the bag to its place. I knew now that my ears had not deceived me when I stood at the window outside and heard the faint clink of coins. Hawthorne evidently was busy then counting or sacking up some of his mysterious wealth.

As carefully as I could, I replaced the drawers I had drawn out, but I could not obliterate the marks of the broken locks. Even if I escaped successfully, Hawthorne would know that an intruder had invaded his treasure house. Well—and just about then I could feel my back stiffen—what if he did? I'd anyway have some pippin of a story.

Yet, after all, it wouldn't be a satisfactory story, I admitted to myself. It wouldn't explain this chest of drawers with its contents of gold coin and precious pearls and the Lord knows what else. It wouldn't disclose the real secret of the diamond bracelet with the obliterated name in the workshop above stairs. McCabe would probably squeal like blue blazes because I hadn't got to the bottom of the mystery.

And—would you believe me—my kicked shin gave me an awful twinge just then, and I shut my teeth and swore to myself that I'd make a complete clean-up of this case even if I had to throw Hawthorne down and choke it out of the crusty guy.

As I stood in the chill and silence of that underground vault, uncertain just what to do, I heard the faint chime of a clock in a room overhead. I was surprised to hear it strike nine. I had an idea that I had been working very fast. But I wasn't sorry at the hour.

"She'll be going to bed soon," I figured, "and then I can finish off this hunt."

But I guessed wrong. The girl didn't go to bed. I could hear the occasional patter of her feet upon the floor above, and now and then a low hum. If she was waiting up for dad, I wouldn't be able to break out until he, too, had hiked off for the night. But suppose he should conclude to pay a visit to his safety-deposit vault in the basement before he retired? Say, I wished hard again, just then, that I had a little snub-nosed blue steel bulldog tucked away somewhere in my clothes. You never know just how violent these hoarders of money and jewels are going to get when they find their treasure in danger.

Well, waiting, my curiosity got the better of me. I wanted to see just what this little girl above looked like. So, blowing out my light, I risked a peep.

Slipping to the foot of the ladder, I slowly ascended until I could grasp the iron hook on the lower side of the trapdoor. Gently I pulled it until the door gave way and furnished me a narrow crack through which I could inspect not only the livingroom from which I had descended, but also what, from the array of mahogany bookcases and the tiers of handsomely bound editions, I took to be the library.

The livingroom was dimly lighted, but a reading lamp flamed brightly in the room beyond. And behind it, with her face in her hands, sat Hawthorne's daughter. I tell you, my machinery got to thumping just about then. I was not more than twelve feet away from her. If she happened to set her eyes on the trapdoor she'd be sure to see me. And if she did, what would she do? And what would I do?

She sat very quietly for a time, so quietly that I thought she might have heard the thumping of my heart. But she didn't, for when she looked up there was no alarm in her face, but, say, boys, there was plenty of beauty there. The softest, most delicate, peaches-and-cream cheeks I ever saw, the sweetest little mouth, the slenderest, most sensitive nose. Sounds mushy from me? Well, kid, let me tell you she had to be some Lillian Russell to strike a bull's-eye like that with me.

I hadn't seen her eyes yet. They were lowered as she picked, with delicate fingers, at the filmy sleeve of her gown. There was something peculiar about that motion, I thought. It was so nervous and aimless and uncanny. It actually made me feel kind of creepy.

Then she picked up a hand mirror that lay on the table and began to smile at the reflection. She tossed her head from one side to the other, throwing out wisps of her golden-brown hair. She murmured faintly to herself.

And then her eyes turned so that I could look fairly at them. I was within a breath of falling off the ladder. I hadn't been through Bellevue for nothing. The grocer's boy was right, after all. Those vacant, expressionless, murky eyes of hers showed she was insane!

CHAPTER VI.

TRAPPED.

If that girl had discovered me in my hiding-place, I wouldn't have been more flabbergasted than I was to find that she wasn't right mentally. I'm a hard-

It clung like a plaster.

ened brute—every old reporter gets that way—but the sight of those wavering, mindless eyes of hers gave me a mighty uncomfortable sensation in the throat.

As I felt then I wouldn't have gone up into the house and, in trying to escape, run the risk of setting her off any worse than she was for all the stuff her father had stowed away in his treasure chest. Soft? Well, let me tell you, that girl was some looker. She almost made me gulp.

I closed the trapdoor softly and again descended to the basement floor. I relighted the lamp and examined the small ventilating aperture I had noticed when I first entered the place. I figured that I might be able to get out that way.

But I couldn't. The opening in the wall was less than a foot square. It wouldn't even admit of the passage of my head. Moreover, it led into a sort of narrow stone pit a couple of feet below the surface of the outside earth evidently, for even when I shaded the light of the lamp away from the spot I could make out no sign of the clear, deep blue sky I had left an hour or two before.

Then I went back to the cabinet of drawers. And as I stood, debating whether or not to break into more of them, an idea came to me that sent a hot and then a cold flash up and down my spine.

That chased diamond bracelet I had seen above stairs with the name of its owner blurred out? Where had I heard of that before? Hadn't I seen it accurately described somewhere? I could recall how closely the description of the bauble fitted it as if I had actually seen it. But where had I seen that description? In the newspapers, to be sure. Yes, yes, I remembered with a quiver, it was in connection with a robbery. Then it all came to me in a flood—the Morgenthal second-story burglary of three weeks ago! Of all the losses, Mrs. Morgenthal had deplored this most. It had been in the family for more than a hundred years.

I was getting so feverish in my excitement that I could feel the perspiration ooze out on my forehead. It isn't often I go so plumb off my nut, but, believe me, my present situation coupled with this present discovery jammed so many ideas into my noodle that I couldn't keep a pant out of my breath. I began to feel like a blooded dog on a hot trail.

From the bracelet I turned to the drawer of pearls again. Drawing it open, I noted once more the shimmering collection with the lustrous black ones in their midst. I counted the latter. There were ten of them. Wow! Mrs. Astorbilt's greatest loss, when the second-story man had gone through her home, was her black pearls, and I distinctly remembered that the police list of her losses stated that there were ten of them. The trail was so hot now I was almost ready to yelp.

Yet I couldn't bring myself to break in on this poor girl above stairs. I began to wonder if she had had any part in the purloining of these rich jewels, but I fired the thought in a hurry. I wasn't so sure about the dad. He was an old man. He probably hadn't in twenty years the agility necessary to break into those second-story windows in the city. But he might be one of a gang? And that brought up the mystery of how an entrance—that everybody had regarded as well-nigh impossible—had been effected into the homes of those robbed rich.

Well, blowing hot and cold, making up my mind to call the police in to round this house up, and then deciding that I would have old Hawthorne pinched away from home, so as to spare the daughter the shock and humiliation, I squatted on the lowest rung of the ladder and thought the thing over. Unconsciously I had settled that I would make no break to get out until the father returned and the house was asleep.

It was a long, chill, weary wait, but I kept it. Once or twice I thought of breaking into the remaining drawers of the treasure cabinet, but it was so still above stairs that I dared not make the attempt, for fear of alarming the solitary and benighted occupant.

Then, sometime after I had heard the clock overhead chime tweleve, I was mighty well pleased at the single honk of an automobile approaching. In less than ten minutes, I heard new and heavier footsteps and then the sound of voices. I sneaked up the ladder and drew down the trap a trifle so that I might hear distinctly.

"Yes, horribly hungry and chilled to the marrow," a voice, deep and stern, spoke. I recognized it as that of Hawthorne.

"Hungry?" slowly repeated the daughter, her voice soft and sweet, and yet so expressionless that it hurt me.

Preparations for a lunch were evidently begun by the girl in a room beyond, while I heard the father ascend the stairs to the second floor. Behind went a steady pat-pat of feet. They didn't sound like those of a dog. They were too heavy for those of a cat. They puzzled me.

Suddenly I heard the harsh, staccato cry: "Gertrude, come here!"

The light footstep sounded its way into the hall.

"Father," she said, meaninglessly, evidently from the foot of the stairs.

"Have you been in my workshop since I went away?" the father's voice was a blend of anger and alarm. It jarred me to recall that I had failed to close the door of the workroom when I had left it earlier in the night.

"Upstairs—no," the girl said in painful monotone.

"Somebody's been in it," Hawthorne shot back. "The door was partly open. I left it closed."

Then began a hurrying of feet back and forth throughout the house. I knew well enough what it meant. Hawthorne was searching the house. He suspected the presence of an interloper. If I remained where I was, he would sooner or later find me. And if he was the thief I began to suspect he was, he would make short work of me, unarmed and in this dungeon. So I prepared to make a break for liberty.

Picking up the heavy screw-driver as a possible weapon, I doused the light and sneaked quietly up the rounds of the ladder. I had drawn down the trap, and was sticking my head through the opening, when I heard Hawthorne's steps close at hand. I tried to duck, but was too late. I saw the glitter of a revolver in his hand.

He discovered me almost at the same time. Did you ever see murder in a man's eyes? Particularly murder that aimed at you? Say, it's a frightful look. It shook my nerve, I can tell you. I could almost see the pearly gates. My eyes blinked as the man dropped to his knees beneath the piano and lifted the gun to the level of my head.

"Damn you!" he blurted, in hot anger. "You did get in, didn't you?"

I did not answer. I was too intent waiting for the click in that revolver that would mean death to me. But I can say this for myself, I wasn't afraid to look death in the face. I kept my eyes wide open. But there was an awful tug at my heart.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STRUGGLE IN THE VAULT.

With every hope gone, help came—in a woman's voice. The daughter, still in that meaningless tone, called: "Father! father!"

I saw the old man wince as if under a blow. His eyes wavered for the fraction of a second. Then, instead of shooting, he raised the revolver and brought it down with all his strength upon my head.

I never saw as many stars at once in all my life. I felt terribly sick at my stomach. My head began to whirl. My hands lost their grip upon the ladder, and I dizzily realized that I was crumpling up and falling.

When I came to, I found myself lying in a heap on the hard floor. My head was aching, and when I lifted my hand to rub it, found a knob had swollen up over one ear—evidently where I had been struck.

Weakly I staggered to my feet. The place was still dark. The pain in my head was so great that I didn't seem to care what happened to me next. So I mounted the ladder again. I pulled the trapdoor down, but when I sought to crawl through the aperture I found it covered with a board.

Try as I might, I couldn't budge it. I lifted with my head, and then with my shoulders, but it would not give way. I figured that the heavy piano had been rolled upon it and was holding it in place, and just about then I wasn't strong enough to fill a piano mover's job.

Descending again, I flopped on the floor, sore in body and head. I was a prisoner. This brute above stairs could keep me here until I starved to death. Then some dark night he could bury me under one of his deserted pine trees, and that would make another mystery for McCabe to try to uncover.

But I didn't flunk. I knew now that I'd got a whale of a story, and I began to ache to see it in print. I even grinned once. To think that I was lying alongside of a small fortune in jewels and money, and yet wasn't any better off than I would have been in a Sing Sing dungeon.

A couple of times I climbed the ladder again and battered on the board that blocked my exit. I called out sharply, but I raised no response. The house above was as noisy as a deaf and dumb asylum. Once I caught myself chuckling. Hawthorne might have me a prisoner, but the joke wasn't all on his side. He was afraid to come down and get his jewels and his gold.

I was roused by hearing a noise outside the house. I traced it to the little ventilating hole in the wall. There came a thud against the foundation

(Continued on page fourteen.)

A Million Miles a Minute

By Paul Crissey

THE interior of the silent laboratory was as varied as a kaleidoscope, and row upon row of bottles covered the sides of the room. The whole room was artificially lighted, and sunken electric bulbs flooded, the interior with a soft, mystic light. At one end a small, metallic, cigar-shaped apparatus filled the space formerly occupied as a library, and at the opposite side of the room the tumbled pile of books which had collected about a big armchair, showed how hurriedly they had been moved from their accustomed place.

All about the laboratory was an air of deeply shrouded mystery, and the great thick walls and the heavy door defied outside interruptions. Two tiny windows high up under the eaves furnished ventilation, and numerous electric fans kept the queerly tainted air which reeked of chemicals, in constant circulation.

This stone house, isolated in continual silence from the great residence a half a mile away, upon the hill, was the workshop of Corrillo Ventres, the man of science whose masterful conclusions and theories had startled the world during the latter part of the year 1990.

Airships, dating back from an origin of half a century before, in what was then the sand dunes of Indiana, had so far materialized before Ventres' time that the sky was full of them, and sleepers, in their homes, woke ofttimes to feel the bright rays of searchlights from the heavens cross their heavy-lidded eyes. And of all this, Corrillo Ventres was the master. For he had been born on an aeroplane en route from New America, in the Arctic, to England. His kingdom had been the air—and in the forty years of his life he turned his mind to the travel of the air, and had given to the world the three advantages which conquered completely the heavens. These three necessities were power, balance, and dirigibility—all in the compact form of a single contrivance wrought by the brain and hand of the scientist.

Not two months before the last great triumph of the noted man occurred, an act which practically upset the world, he had given out a startling statement which the sensation-loving public eagerly snapped up and accepted, in part, in some cases wholly, and left the inhabitants throbbing with a new wonderment.

"A million miles a minute is a practical speed which will be attained by human beings before this year is over," Corrillo Ventres had told a newspaper correspondent, quietly, unobtrusively, and with a subtle, mystic challenge in his voice.

And upon the publication of this startling statement, other public representatives had called at the scientist's mansion in search of news; but were met by a quiet-faced woman who wearily reiterated her statement that the Professor was not at home—that he had gone away and would not return for some time. And even as the reporters turned their backs upon the inventor's home, the public cried aloud for further particulars of the great prophecy which had set the world agog.

"How will it be done—what is possible if such speed can be attained?" they cried, and no one solved the problem save one young man, who, quite by chance, placed himself in such a position that Ventres told him, showed him all he knew, whether the young man would or no.

And it was in this manner that the greatest scientist the world had ever known, in the year of 1990, led a young newspaper man through a hairbreadth episode which no man before or since has experienced.

Late in the afternoon following the day upon which Corrillo Ventres had made his startling prophecy that men would make a speed of a million miles a minute, Heath, a newspaper man, received his orders to interview the scientist. He put his pocket instrument in his coat, adjusted the batteries, and was ready to cover the assignment.

Four hours later, in company with other reporters, he learned that access to the Professor was impossible. Struggling with himself, he watched his comrades return to the city, watched their huge chartered airship drift through space until it was but a speck in the blue sky, then he sat down, unmolested, in a clump of bushes behind the Professor's house. Determined against failure, he decided to await any possible developments which might bring an opportunity to realize his object. But none came immediately, and it was not until dusk that he saw a servant slip from the mansion and hurry through the hedges in the twilight to the rear of the big estate.

Instantly Heath was on his feet. Quickly he noted the food which the servant was carrying, and a moment later he came upon the hidden laboratory, cleverly concealed in the bushes. He saw the servant leave the tray of food upon the doorstep, and waited until she had left; then he slowly, carefully, reconnoitered his position.

But one plan seemed feasible, and after a moment's haggling with himself he decided to put it into instant execution. Unhesitatingly he scrambled up the rough stone wall of the small building, grasping the steel waterspout for support, and a moment later he was head and shoulders into the small ventilation window under the eaves.

For a moment he listened, then slowly he drew himself through the small opening and surveyed the room within. A gray-haired man, small of stature, with pale face and bright eyes, was poring over a great map which hung suspended under three electric lights. The reporter moved restlessly in his narrow cubby-hole, high up on the wall, but the man in the chair paid no attention to the movement of life in his solitary study. Once he smiled to himself, stuck a pin in a certain spot on the map, and measured a distance with a tiny scale.

"You might as well come down," Ventres remarked, vaguely; "it is much more comfortable down here."

He seemed to be speaking to himself, and not for an instant did he raise his eyes as Heath slid dextrously to the floor. But the moment the reporter's feet touched the floor the scientist's hand gently pressed a button at his side, and the next second where the ventilator hole had been there was nothing but a solid blank wall. He was securely trapped, but safe for the moment, unless the mysterious scientist had some concealed plan of ridding himself of intruders. But nothing of this sort happened. For a moment neither man spoke, Heath looking over the shoulder of Ventres and eagerly scanning the great map which lay spread before him. Already the young reporter knew that he had gained far more than his brothers in the profession, for he had entered the sanctum sanctorum of the great master.

Surprised, almost befuddled for a second, at the quick turn of events, Heath glanced rapidly about him, making mental notes of every piece of apparatus in the room. He knew that he was the first man from the outside world to enter this workroom, and he knew that opportunity lay in every angle of the room. What should he do if he did not succeed in getting the information he had been specifically assigned to? He realized that he must get the news to his paper as soon as he could, and he hurriedly felt of the instrument in his pocket. His fingers convinced him that it was in working condition, for it, too, was an invention of the man before him. And as he thought in this channel, Heath remembered what a stir in the world the little pocket wireless apparatus had made when its invention had been made public, and he thanked his lucky stars that he could fire the news directly from his pocket to his paper without having to reach a 'phone or catch an aëro back to the city.

He glanced again at the map before him, and saw and realized for the first time what it was. He again thanked fortune that the State laws had made

It was coming down at him out of the night!

the study of the solar system a non-optional course in the schools, for he could understand the big sheet of blue print before him. It was a complete flat chart of the solar system, and across its surface ran a broad white mark, which, in some vague way, created more than usual interest in Heath's mind. Instantly his fingers closed about the key of the wireless in his pocket, and he sent out the call for his office.

No sooner had the circuit closed than there was a crash of sparks on an instrument across the room. Heath read his own call that he was sending out in those streaks of fire.

"You're intercepting my call!" he cried. "Shut off your instrument." As he spoke he stepped across the room, but Ventres was before him.

"No, no!" said the scientist, "you cannot." With one hand which spoke of strength not imaginable in the frail body, Ventres swept the young man aside, and for the first time entered into conversation with him. "It's useless," he continued. "You cannot get your office. No word must go out of here tonight. Quite by accident you have entered my laboratory, and quite by accident you will remain. My secret which you search for shall never be made public until I am convinced beyond a doubt that it is a success."

Heath fell back. He remembered suddenly the soft closing of the window by which he had entered, and knew that the mystic wizard of science had him completely at his service. With a shrug he gave it up.

"Very well, then," he answered coolly. "What shall I do?"

"Wait—wait!" said Ventres, sharply. "Wait for a while as I have done—you will not have long, I assure you." As he spoke his face lit up with a strange, reckless look which caused the young man to wonder more than before if his personal safety as well as his story was at all assured. He had, however, no time to answer; for suddenly a gong struck on the side wall and the Professor, with the queer light still blazing in his eyes, jumped for the photophone which hung on the wall.

Heath listened intently but could hear nothing. The scientist was talking with his hands, and Heath, nothing loath, stepped behind his host and looked over his shoulder into the photophone lens. The face of Marterly, the astronomer, was reflected there in the glass diaphragm and he was gesticulating wildly to Ventres. Heath guessed they were speaking in code and made no pretense of understanding what they were saying. Nevertheless, he put the astronomer's call and the great map together and guessed vaguely the answer. It was nothing. What the scientist was planning to do was a mystery which he could not solve.

"There," cried Ventres, suddenly turning from the 'phone, "at last I have the right conditions—but I forget—you do not understand." He shrugged his shoulders and turned to the young man. "You have broken into my shop, taken me very nearly unawares—and at a most critical time. I dare not let you go. This experiment tonight is by far the most important one I have ever planned. Whether I live to tell the world or not will be a different thing, but you must not live to tell of my failure."

"Good God?" cried Heath, aghast, "you do not mean to say that you are going to kill me?" He was almost convinced that he was dealing with a madman—that the great scientist, the wizard of the world, had broken under the terrific pace the years had led in his mind, and he shuddered slightly to think of the thousands of ways which Ventres could kill him without his being able to raise a finger.

Ventres smiled suddenly.

"I hope not, Mr. Heath," he answered pleasantly, "for in that case I would probably suffer the same death as you. No—I am not going to kill you intentionally, but I am going to give you the same chance with life and death which I, myself, have. You are going to share with me, Mr. Heath, the greatest experiment of the age, and if you perish you will do so knowing that you have died in the cause of science."

"How do you know my name?" asked Heath.

"I heard you give it to the maid at my home," the scientist replied. "You see I have several findings which I have not made public to the world—in spite of the excellent publicity agents which our newspapers have." He smiled slightly at this compliment to the young man before him, but Heath was in no mood to receive flattery.

"How?" he asked.

For answer Ventres led him to a nearby table and touched a button upon an instrument there. Instantly from the black metal mouth there came a dull, throaty roar, and Heath heard many voices in conversation. Then the scientist pushed another key and the roar increased. Suddenly the reporter could hear the tram cars in the city two hundred miles away. He heard a newsboy cry his calls, he heard a fruit vender, and all of the many voices of the city boomed in his ears.

"Is it not ideal?" laughed the man of inventions, but Heath could scarcely answer. The little instrument was like a giant ear which caught and repeated the noises of the earth with distance unreckoned.

"Wonderful!" the reporter said, "but the greatest of them all is to come, you say? And I am to share in it? A life-and-death venture with the outcome not assured? Well, Ventres, you will find me game to the last. Now, out with it. What is this latest theory of yours, and what is our venture going to be?" He spoke crisply, with more assurance than he felt, for what might not this wonderful man have planned for his next daring departure from all the theories of the world?

"Let me say first," said Ventres, slowly, "that I am more than glad you came. As a matter of fact, I influenced you more or less while you sat out there in the bushes, and it was my mental suggestions which made you look for a place to enter my shop. I need help for tonight, and I believe you are the man I want. I seldom make a mistake, sir, in the sizing up of a human being.

"Now for our work in hand. Some years ago, when we discovered the code with which the people on the new planet were signaling to us, the help of Oswald Regal, the great puzzle solver, enabled me to hit upon a theory that would make more things out of the question today practical tomorrow than would have been dreamed of a few years ago. By a few years I mean a comparatively few. Say in the year 1909, or thereabouts. And I solved that theory to all practical purposes. Today there is a new planet burning in the heavens. I put that planet there! I can put more there—and, Mr. Heath, I can put myself there!"

Heath sank back in his chair utterly breathless, for the scientist's face was blazing with an unearthly light. The very room was charged with an electrical current that thrilled the bodies of the two men until they were fairly shaking.

Like a man stricken with palsy, the reporter rose to his feet, and over his trembling lips came the question:

"How? In God's name, how?"

"Ah," cried Ventres, "I see I have you interested, eh? You catch the idea. I am not mad—because I am going to prove to you before the night is over that I can do it." He shook a trembling hand over the table, and his voice rose and fell with emotion.

"I believe," screamed Heath, "but how—how—how?"

For a moment the room was as still as death, and Heath hung over the table, his face thrust forward like a bulldog's into that of the other man.

"A million miles a minute—speed—speed!" cried Ventres, and he waved his hand to the other end of the room where the long, sleek, cigar-shaped instrument lay like a fallen elephant upon the floor. "A million miles a minute in that machine—and what is not possible? For a year or more I have worked on that—slaved—it has been my life. From the minute I started work on it I have never left this room—and now it is ready. Tonight the heavenly bodies lie in the favorable positions for a trip from this earth, and tonight, Mr. Heath, you and I will take a little trip of a million miles

a minute into the heavens. Now, are you game?"

Head sunk forward, eyes starting from their sockets, the reporter stared fiercely into the flushed face of the world's wizard, and his heart sank within him. Then, quite suddenly, he remembered that he was in the power of this strange man. The trip was not optional with him. He must go whether he liked it or not—and so he consented.

"Everything is in readiness," said Ventres, wiping his perspiring face. "You are to write no letters, leave no word to tell those whom we have left behind where we have gone. If all goes right—and I hope it will—we will be back in this very room in less than an hour."

As he spoke the scientist was busy about the machine at the rear of the room, and the reporter was watching him anxiously. At last he found his voice.

"Will we go to a planet?" he asked, and immediately felt foolish.

"No," answered the wizard, "I have adjusted the pleorite to attain about five million miles. Then it will stop. I fear to venture upon what we know nothing about."

It was upon Heath's tongue to remark that they knew nothing about the whole blamed business, but he forebore and waited upon the elder man to finish his careful inspection of the pleorite.

"Now," said Ventres after a five-minute deliberation, "now we are ready." As he spoke he reached within the pleorite and switched on a few tiny electric lights which glowed like diminutive eyes in the dark interior of the tube-like machine.

A quick glance gave him a general idea of the place where he was to lie during the coming terrific ride, and his heart beat faster as he leaned forward to inspect more closely the furnishings of the pleorite. Each of the shaded electric globes hung over an instrument of some sort, while controlling levers, numerous tanks, and switches covered the side wall. These walls themselves were very nearly as thin as paper, yet made of some metal of marvelous resistance and wonderful lightness. It was but a shell of a machine, with the floor inside covered with two huge soft mattresses of a peculiar texture which, upon his asking, the scientist said were made of inder-ochre, a shock absorber of his own invention. On the sides of the car were tiny can-like objects which controlled its flight through space.

"This," said the Professor, pointing to a round perforated disk in the bottom of the car, "is what I studied on the longest. Without it we would never move an inch in the direction we want to go. It is an instrument which kills the effect of gravity upon the machine. When it is in operation we are entirely free from any of the earth's forces except the one we want, and that is centrifugal force. I may say that the whole secret of my success with these pleorites has been in the fact that I have made nature do most of the work of generating speed, by removing the restraining forces of the earth and cultivating the helping forces. I was raised to the ceiling of this room four times in a minute while I was experimenting with the gravity excluder which you see under the car."

He paused, and Heath waited for the order which he felt was inevitable at the moment. He was not to be disappointed in this conclusion that they were ready to start.

"Now," said the scientist, "if you will take your place on the mattress on the further side of the floor, we will start."

To the reporter the order sounded like that of his execution, but in the year he was living it was not for a man to be timid. So he obediently threw himself to rest on the mattress, watching the movements of the great Ventres through the hatchway. The scientist moved hither and thither and about the room, pausing now and then at the instruments and turning off various switches. Lastly he paused at a great nickel handle, an electric controller which he turned. From somewhere in the darkness there came a rumbling noise that gradually gained in volume. Meanwhile the floor shook with an unseen force, and Heath looked suddenly out into the blue star-dotted sky. One end of the building had been opened as if by magic, and the tube-like pleorite glistened queerly in the pale moonlight which flooded through the gap in the structure.

In a moment the reporter felt the scientist creep carefully in beside him, and he saw that his comrade's face was outlined in the pale light which came from the tiny shaded globes of the car. The faces of the dials and registers in the car glistened and one or two indicator hands moved, silently about their arcs as Ventres turned a lever.

"Are you ready?" asked the wizard, in a muffled voice, and Heath gasped an assent.

Instantly the scientist turned a controller handle and the small hatch of the car closed noiselessly. The two men were locked in the cigar-shaped pleorite.

"A million miles a minute," murmured Heath, feverishly, and a cold sweat broke out all over his body. It was a horrible strain. Looking out through the slot-like port in what might be the bow of the air-craft, the reporter could see the slender rails of the skid stretch heavenward ready to guide him on toward nothingness. To be hurled to death with a semi-maniac was not pleasant. Yet the man beside him was so powerful, so mysterious, and so cool that the effect upon the younger man was calming. He waited, strained, nervous, yet giving no outward sign, for the start of the terrific speed.

"Ready!" said the wizard, and in an instant Heath was conscious of a slight shudder. Then he felt his insides drop to his feet. His brain was there, too, and he was dimly conscious of being able to look up along a deep stretch of semi-darkness and see his body stretched out motionless. His body was outdistancing his spirit and the connection was a single intangible thread. Also, he was sure of the presence of another vague being close beside him and it seemed years before he could turn his gaze from his own body to that of the spirit near him. At last, however, he did so and he saw the pink line extending from the vague shadowy something beside him to the body of Ventres. Ventres' spirit had left his body, too, and was floating near his own. Then there was a sudden shower of sparks in which he felt his middle region being torn asunder, as it seemed, and then, weak and dazed, he found himself completely conscious.

Ventres, slowly collecting his wits, held his watch in his hand.

"Four and one half minutes," he announced, finally. "We are four million, five hundred thousand miles from earth. Read all of the dials near you and put down the figures you see the hands pointing to. Get the numbers of the dials, also. I have no time to explain now. I am afraid to stay any longer."

"Afraid?" said Heath, "why afraid now?"

"We may get into the influence of some solar planet where my gravity controller will fail entirely, and then do, we will whirl through space until we get into a stratum of azigen and then we will burn up."

"Look!" cried Heath, suddenly, "what is that dial doing?"

"We must start back—if we can," said Ventres, suddenly, seeing the action of the hand on the forward dial. "We are whirling now at the rate of twice that of the earth. See—see that white light—that must be Mars. Those abrasions on the surface are great elevated structures. See the flames from those pillars! They are enormous. Not canals—I have always held to that theory. I knew they were not canals."

The man's voice shook with eagerness and all the time he was frantically working levers.

"It was one thing to get here—now it's another to get back. We——"

"We will do it, never fear," said Ventres. "As soon as the path which we made through space comes round to us again we will slip into it. By loosening a quantity of air from the little tanks you saw, we will be able to get an effect of gravity which ought to carry us back toward earth, and toward force. You see the theory is that of not having any resistence to go back against. By coming here with an outside force we took nothing away from nothing—and left a streak of nothingness for our path. That streak, or pathway, will always remain there in the upper nothingness. Now we can throw on the gravity disposer as we near the earth, and check our speed. By the first theory we ought to land right where we started from, if nothing throws us out of our path. And by using the gravity controller I ought to be able to land as lightly as a feather on the very skids we started from. In a few seconds we will know."

Then came again the horrible sensation of Heath's spirit lagging behind his body, but this time the actual pain was more intense, for, as soon as Ventres felt himself slipping off into unconsciousness he pulled the gravity killer and retarded the progress of the machine. And thus, by jerks and jolts, the scientist and the reporter neared the earth at a tremendous speed.

Suddenly the scientist grasped at a lever but it fell to the floor of the car. Madly he reached for another, but that, also, became disconnected. A great fear rose in the reporter's throat and he tried in vain to check the cry which slipped over his lips. His feet grew strangely hot, then the interior of the pleorite became stifling.

"We will never make it," cried the Professor, "I have let too much air out of the tanks on the outside. We are blazing all over! From the earth—we—look—like—a—meteor."

Heath ground his teeth. He could not think consecutively, for the fluctuations of his spirit from his body, but he grasped the import of the scientist's remark. They were hurling through space, blazing as they went, and already the heat had melted off the controller handles. He watched the scientist at his side as he pulled frantically at the handles, and wondered vaguely once or twice just how it would end. The front of the car was slowly becoming red with the heat.

"A second more," shouted Ventres, and he drew his hand from the gravity controller as it melted into a soft heap and seared its way into the bottom of the car. There was a momentary flash, and Heath felt a flame lick him from head to foot. Then, suddenly, he went crashing through the air, into a vast space which hurled him onward. For a brief second he wondered how far he was from the earth—wondered if he would be conscious when he landed, and wondered if there was not a chance of his becoming a meteor. Then a blackness enveloped him for a second.

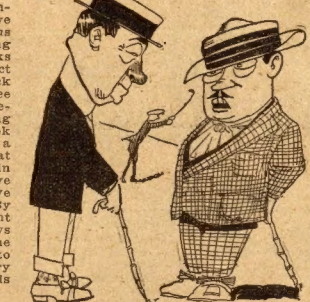
When next he was conscious he felt the waters of a broad lake leaping at his face and cooling the burning red spots on his body. It was deliciously cool. He looked up into a black sky and saw a speck nearing him. It was bright, and at first he thought it was a shooting star, but as it grew larger he watched it. It was coming down at him out of the night at a terrific speed. Unable to move, he watched it near him, then without warning a great hot mass of metal struck near him and he sank, while the water above his sinking form bubbled and boiled with the fierce heat. A thousand prongs dug into his body. His brain reeled, but he knew he was still alive, an undoubtedly on the earth. A thousand pains filled his aching body, his eyes seemed to be pried out of their sockets, and something tore frantically at his ears. He could stand the pain no longer. He must breathe, he must get to the surface.

With a last effort he tried to swim and, fortunately, he managed to get his head above the surface and there he struggled for a moment. The scientist had probably been burned to death in their meteoric flight—he didn't know and he didn't care. He, Heath, was slowly dying out there in the lake. A great sea of blackness surrounded him and the first edges of its blanket-like form were beginning to slip over him. He screamed once, twice, then he heard his name called.

"Heath—Heath!" and the tone was peremptory. He gave a final struggle and pulled himself to a high position in the water. But it was not night, now. Instead, before him burned an electric light—and on the desk upon which rested his feet he saw his typewriter and the first edition of the day's paper which the copy boy had left. He was back in the office of the Post, where he was a reporter, and——

Eagerly he picked up the paper and read the date line. It was not 1990 as he had supposed, but 1909—and the city editor was calling his name for the third time. Wearily Heath rose to his feet and stepped to the editor's desk.

"If you're through with your nap, Heath," said that dignitary, sarcastically, "will you step out and get a story about this near-balloonist who was killed this morning by falling from his old gas-bag into the lake? And don't go to sleep on the way!"



Howell—I'm out of shape today.
Powell—Wife been sitting on you again?

He Was Game.

A St. Paul youth called up his sweetheart in Chicago by long distance and enjoyed a little talk. The time slipped by and the rates slipped up. It was a pleasant half-hour all right, but presently he came back to earth and then a rapid mental calculation showed him he had talked $18 worth. But he was game.

"What are you laughing at?" the girl inquired.

"I'm laughing to think that this little talk has cost me as much as a railway trip to Chicago and return."

"Mercy!" screamed the girl. "Why don't you stop?"

"Well," replied the youth. "I want to add enough for a parlor car each way."

So they talked a little longer.

"Just one word more," said the youth.

"What's that for?"

"Tips for the porters."

Then he rang off.

Paid Too Much.

The finding of an old document suggests a famous anecdote of the late Admiral Evans, which ran something in this fashion: The Admiral one Sunday went to church in a certain city and sat down in a pew which seemed to him to be in a good strategic position. The owner of the pew, who did not recognize the Admiral, at once wrote on a slip of paper and handed it to him: "My name is ——, and I pay $1,000 a year for this pew."

Admiral Evans at once wrote on the slip and returned it: "My name is Bob Evans, and I think you pay too —— much."

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I have originated the wonderful *Adler* plan of selling organs which has made the "*Adler*" a household word; more than 75,000 of these famous organs are now in the homes of the people. The time has arrived—*this very day*—for you to send for my Wonderful Free Organ Catalog. Learn how you can have the World's Best Organ—winner of highest prize at St. Louis World's Fair—sent to your home for 30 Days' Trial without paying a cent.

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Fruit Peddler—You have to get a license to sell the frankfurters?
Sausage Vender—Sure.
Fruit Peddler—And what kind of license you call it?
Sausage Vender—I don't know; but I guess it is a sort of dog license.

Seeking Safety.

"What makes so many people put mortgages on their homes and buy automobiles?"

"Well," said Mr. Chuggins, "in these days it's worth something to avoid the risks of being a pedestrian."

Very Likely.

Cousin Silas (reading)—It says in this here paper that a flea kin jump 2,000 times its own length.

Uncle Heck—That's probably why we never hear of a flea getting run over by an automobile!"—Puck.

Craft.

Foozle—Doc Woozle wants ter sell his outer.

Buff—What's the reason?

Foozle—He figgers that the one that buys it will be a steady patient ever after.

Explained.

"Didn't some idiot propose to you before our marriage?"

"Certainly."

"Then you ought to have married him."

"That's just what I did."

Curious to Learn.

In Georgia they tell of a prisoner who had been convicted a dozen times of stealing, who, when placed at the bar for his latest offense, displayed a singular curiosity.

"Your honor," said he, "I should like to have my case postponed for a week. My lawyer is sick."

"But," said the magistrate, "you were caught with your hand in this gentleman's pocket. What can your counsel say in your defense?"

"Exactly so, your honor; that is what I am curious to know."

No Plumber Needed.

"Hello, hello!" said the lady at the telephone. "Are you Mr. Swipeley, the plumber? Well, the man you sent to fix the leak here has gone away, and the pipe is leaking as badly as ever. What's that? What?"

"What did he say?" asked her husband when she had hung up the receiver and turned toward him with a hopeless look.

"He said the plumber had just returned to the shop and reported that he thought I could stop it if I talked to it."

An Injunction Wanted.

"Do you favor limiting the powers of the courts?"

"Just now," replied the statesmen, "I'm in favor of extending them. What I want is some way to get an injunction that'll prevent publications from putting all the funny stories into print before I get a chance to tell 'em to my constituents."

Glad Relief.

"Thank heaven, those bills are got rid of," said Bilkins, fervently, as he tore up a bundle of statements of account dated June 1.

"All paid, eh?" said Mrs. Bilkins.

"Oh, no," said Bilkins. "The duplicates dated July 1 have come in and I don't have to keep these any longer."

Problems.

"Well," said the man who tries to be genial, "July has its comforts. We are no longer worried about when to put on a new straw hat."

"No," replied Mr. Growcher, "but you're liable to get all fretted up seeing how long you can make an old one last."

Her Father's Answer.

"What did her father say when you asked for her hand?"

"Said he'd been wondering what I had been passing him two-for-a-quarter cigars for so regularly of late."

Mrs. Bridemore—Haven't you got that turkey dressed yet?
Mr. Bridemore—Almost, my love. It will be dressed as soon as I can find the hooks and eyes to fasten it up.

Waves.

"How wild and wonderful are the waves that keep beating on the shore!" exclaimed the girl at the seashore.

"They are quite some," replied the man who lives there the year through. "But you ought to see the reform waves that come rolling up once in a while."

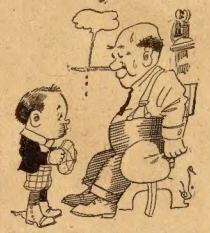
Answered.

Mr. Strong—See here! I want it settled right now who is going to be the man of this house from this time on.

Mrs. Strong (witheringly)—You are, of course. Do you suppose I wish to be anything so insignificant and contemptible as a man?

DEFENSELESS.

The Kid—Say, ma! What did the knights do in the Middle Ages if fleas bit 'em?



Employer—We want a diplomatic, tactful, smart office boy.

Boy—Well, I used to send sister's beau away when she didn't want to see him.

The Feminine "Touch."

Wife—Wretch! Show me that letter.

Husband—What letter?

Wife—That one in your hand. It's from a woman. I can see by the writing, and you turned pale when you saw it.

Husband—Yes. Here it is. It's your dressmaker's bill.

It Drove Him Cityward.

"I see a great deal in the papers these days about intensive farming," said the Grouch this morning. "Father's idea of intensiveness was what drove me to the city."

Slow to Give Up.

"Doctor, did my brother kick about giving up smoking."

"Yes, and he wasn't any too enthusiastic about giving up $5."

Very Still.

"Is your mother painting any still life now?"

"Yes; father's portrait."

Sat Behind Lady

"Did you go to the theater last night?"

"I did."

"And what did you see?"

"A bow of chiffon, some tortoiseshell combs, a couple of black plumes, a velvet knot and a stuffed bird about the size of a hen."

Like Mamma.

"You must not talk all the time, Ethel," said the mother who had been interrupted.

"When will I be old enough to, mamma?" asked the little girl.

"It's a Wise Child—"

Tommy—Me father gimme dis nickel watch fur me birthday.

Jimmy—I guess my pop's goin' ter gimme one like dat, too.

Tommy—Did he say so?

Jimmy—No; he said he was goin' ter gimme a gold one.

Very Bad.

"Her letter rejects me finally and forever."

"Sure it's final? Nothing between the lines?"

"There's only one line."

Way He Was Thankful.

Wife—Do you like those beautiful suspenders I embroidered for you, dear?

Hubby—Yes, darling. They don't show when I am dressed.

Poor Stuff.

De Reader—Is Scribbler a great poet?

De Booker—I guess not. He had an ode accepted by a celebration committee.

Distress Signal.

The elopers were stranded in Duluth, and it was a long walk home.

"We must communicate with the old folks at home," said the pretty bride.

"Yes," echoed the bridegroom, decisively, "we must send a wireless distress call to your father."

"Ah, the new 'S. O. S.!'"

"No the old 'C. Q. D.'—Cash. Quick, Daddy!"

Wedded Glooms.

"The Neverbegays appear to have brought their troubles with them to the hotel."

"Poor things! How did you hear?"

"I overheard them myself on the verandа. He began to talk about having to attend to the furnace next winter and she reminded him that they have no coal in the cellar yet."

Not Up to Standard.

"The cook is going to quit," said young Mrs. Torkins.

"What's the matter?" asked her husband. "Doesn't she like us?"

"Yes; she's perfectly satisfied. But her family doesn't approve of the quality of what she brings home."

An Innocent Victim.

"What a frightfully profane bird that parrot is."

"Polly isn't exactly what I should call profane. The language comes from being owned by a young man who was learning to recite some of this modern 'red blood poetry'."

A Real One.

"There are very few real optimists," remarked the contemplative citizen.

"What is your idea of a real optimist?"

"A man who can walk to work just as cheerfully as if he were chasing a golf ball."

All Alike.

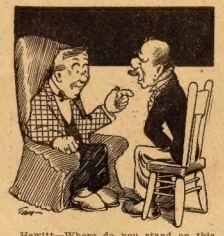
Mr. William Sikes (to startled spinster)—Dah, lady, don't yer be frightened. It ain't yer I'm after, it's yer dollars.

The spinster (reproachfully)—Goodness gracious! You too!

Quite a Game.

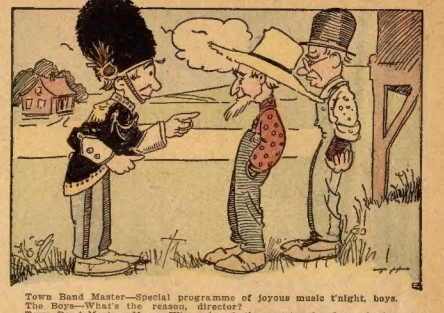
"I have found something to live for, something to fill my life, something to occupy every waking moment."

"Yes, I know—bridge. It is a fascinating game."



Hewitt—Where do you stand on this suffragette business?

Jewett—Let them go ahead and take our place and the day will come when they will be paying us alimony.



Town Band Master—Special programme of joyous music t'night, boys.
The Boys—What's the reason, director?
Town Band Master—Mayor Wiggs found the quarter he dropped through the sidewalk in front of the Bon Ton.

The Latest Variation.

"In straitened circumstances, is he not?"

"Yes. He confesses that it is about all he can do to keep the wolf out of the garage."

Her Vacation.

"Yes, the fair divorcee is taking a two weeks' rest."

"And then?"

"And then she marries again."

A Suitable Name.

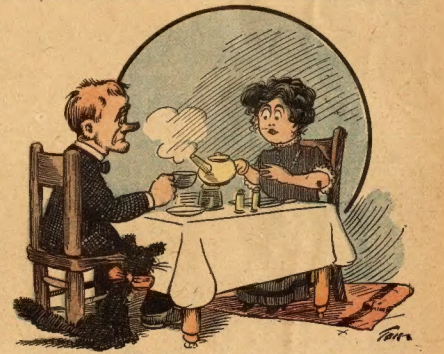
"Why do you call your country place, 'The Balkans'?"

"Oh, it gives me nothing but trouble."

Wanted His Fee.

"What did your lawyer friend say when you asked him for his daughter?"

"He refused to answer any question without a retainer."



Angry Wife—Henry Wing, did I see you slipping my pie under the table to the cat?

The Hubby—No, ma'am; I think as much of that pussy as you do!

Prepared for It.

"Hubby, I'm going in for the simple life awhile."

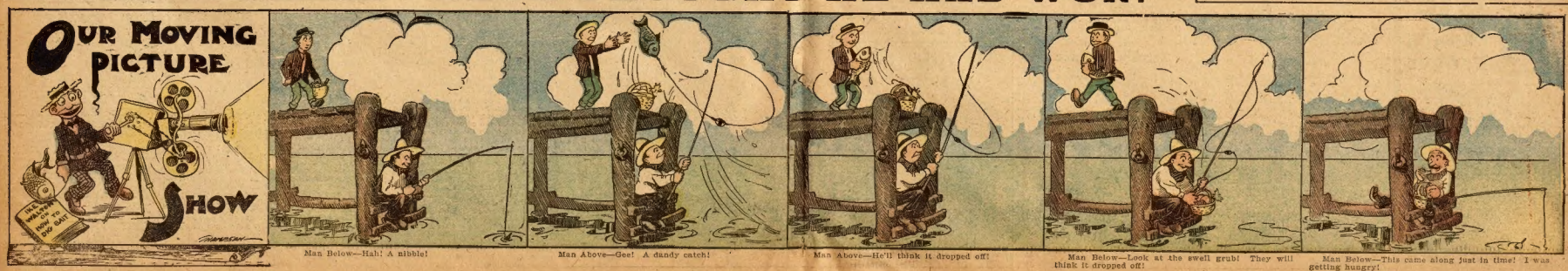
"All right, my dear," said hubby, as he reached for his checkbook. "How many gowns will that require?"

Congratulated.

"The thermometer was 99 degrees in the shade out our way," said one suburban pioneer.

"You're lucky," replied the other. "Out our way there wasn't any shade."

EACH THOUGHT HE HAD WON.



Man Below—Hah! A nibble!

Man Above—Gee! A dandy catch!

Man Above—He'll think it dropped off!

Man Below—Look at the swell grub! They will think it dropped off!

Man Below—This came along just in time! I was getting hungry!

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—also style charts, measurement blank tape, etc., without any obligation on your part—just as soon as we get your letter. Then we prepay everything. Remember, the time of this offer is limited—so if you're full of ambition and want money, you'll hear about this. Men who have the keenness to find this small advertisement, to read it and to answer it are just the type of men we favor. So send on your name and address at once.

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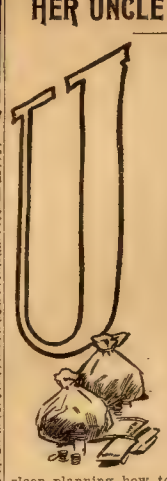
HER UNCLE HORACE.



UNCLE HORACE was over 60 and discouragingly rich.

There is a point where one's income becomes so great that people pass from common, ordinarily covetous envy to a resignedly helpless state of mind. They write down the figures of that income, stare at them and then say, "Oh, shucks! There ain't no such income!" That was the delightful kind of income Uncle Horace had.

Mrs. Stebbins and Mrs. Cromp, his two nieces, were so devoted to him and said they counted it such a joy to have the dear old man's presence glorify their homes that they lost good sleep planning how to entice him away from each other.

Moreover, each was firmly convinced that the other was a designing person and that the way she fawned upon Uncle Horace with an eye to the future was simply shocking. Both of them were exceedingly thankful that they were not that kind.

Since he had come to stay with Mrs. Stebbins for a few months she had felt that something was wrong with Uncle Horace. If it had not been for his income Uncle Horace would have been a small, insignificant individual with pale eyes and an unpleasant habit of wanting the best chair, and of sitting in the next room and coughing when his niece had callers. Under the circumstances he was a reserved, original man with ideas of his own, which his relatives delighted to humor.

What worried Mrs. Stebbins especially was Uncle Horace's air of abstraction and his unwonted helpfulness. Usually he was under feet, investigating everything that went on and getting in the way tremendously. On these occasions Mrs. Stebbins was wont to say, through her teeth, that it was perfectly wonderful the way Uncle Horace kept up his youthful interest in things.

"Not in this rain!"

This time he paid no attention to what was going on in the house, but would sit deep in meditation or stare out of the window. Mrs. Stebbins' first fear was that he was losing his mind.

She said she would feel perfectly terrible if anything like that happened to the dear old man while he was under her care. She said she never would be able to forgive herself, never!

"Mebbe it's rheumatism," Stebbins suggested, hopefully. "That is liable to make a man do almost anything!"

"Don't you want some more blankets on your bed, Uncle Horace?" his niece asked him after this suggestion. "Are you perfectly comfortable?"

"Thank you, Tilda, I'm perfectly comfortable," Uncle Horace had responded. "I guess I'll go after the mail!"

This was really a double blow, for Uncle Horace normally was not polite, and he always wanted anything that was offered him, no matter what it was, and also it was a long walk to the postoffice.

Mrs. Stebbins had begged him to let little Johnny go and save his own strength, but Uncle Horace had persisted. He said he felt that he ought to do something instead of sitting around and letting the family wear themselves out waiting on him, and that he was glad to be of service.

"Not in this rain, Uncle Horace!" or "Surely not when the wind is blowing so, Uncle Horace!" or "Don't worry me by going out in this snowstorm, Uncle Horace!" had not the remotest effect upon him when he started to climb into his galoshes and wrappings to go after the mail.

Mrs. Stebbins said to her husband, dolefully, that she feared it was the beginning of the end.

The week that Uncle Horace took to starting at a sound and to flushing at a word or an unexpected look, filled Mrs. Stebbins with alarm. That something awful was the matter with Uncle Horace she was convinced and she besought him to see a doctor. She made him jelly and fed him beef tea despite his protests and tried in vain to get some intelligible conversation out of him.

Then one day he went after the mail and did not come back.

Mrs. Stebbins had the whole town out searching for him. She wept as she looked on closet shelves and up trees and in other impossible places and said nobody could know how her heart bled at the idea that darling old Uncle Horace might be in terrible danger that very moment.

The Stebbins family and most of the town stayed up all night searching. Then the next morning a note that explained everything came from Uncle Horace.

"I went away to get married," he wrote in his crabbed hand. "I have been corresponding for some time with a most estimable widow of 45, who wants to make a home for me in my old age. She has four children, and we will all come to visit you soon, for I know you will be as fond of Sally and the children as you are of me."

They revived Mrs. Stebbins three times before she quit fainting. Then she remembered that Mrs. Cromp was hit just as hard as she was and that made her feel better.

"It serves that designing, self-seeking woman exactly right!" she told the neighbors. "Pretending to care about the doddering, foolish, tiresome old man! As for me, I took him in because I felt it was my duty!"

Friend of the Family.

When Miss Ann Pickett dropped in on her neighbor, Mrs. Spicer, and found her mopping over the fragments of a glass vase, Miss Ann sympathized generously. "It must have been quite a costly vase," she said, looking admiringly at the pieces.

"No, it only cost seventy-five cents," Mrs. Spicer acknowledged. "'Tain't that I feel so bad about."

"Maybe it was a gift that you prized because of associations——"

Mrs. Spicer shook her head. "Jim and I bought it over in Tompkinsville a long time ago; I prized it because it was such a saving to the family. The first year we had it I kept it on the front shelf for a general ornament; then when Jim's birthday came and I hadn't anything else handy to give, I gave him the vase for his own. Next Christmas, instead of paying out good money to buy something new, he gave it back to me for a Christmas present; then I gave it to Jim junior on his birthday, and he gave it to Sue Belle on hers.

"The next spring all the kinfolks got up a birthday party for old Aunt Sallie Spicer, and we took her the vase; Sallie she'd kep' it a good bit, she gave it to Jim's sister Jane for a weddin' present, and afterward Jane gave it to me and Jim when we had our china weddin'. I was counting on giving it to Jim again on his next birthday, and now here it is smashed to flinders.

"I tell you, Miss Ann, it most makes me cry to think of losing such a useful family article—so near Jim's birthday, too!"

Turning the Tables.

Mr. and Mrs. Bentley, who had spent half the morning in trying to find a flat that kept the promise of its advertisement at last hit upon one that seemed inviting. It was in a respectable neighborhood, within easy walking distance of the transportation lines, and conveniently arranged. They sought the agent of the building.

"What is the rent of those vacant apartments on the second floor?" inquired Mr. Bentley.

"How large is your family?" asked the agent, in turn.

"This is the entire family."

"Our price for those apartments is thirty dollars a month."

"Well I have no fault to find with that."

"We require references, of course."

Mr. Bentley was amply provided with references, which proved satisfactory.

"How soon could you move in?" asked the agent.

"We could move in at once, but there is something else to be settled before we do. Can you give us satisfactory references?"

"Can I give you references!" gasped the agent. "I don't have to do that."

"Oh, yes, you do, if you get us for tenants."

"I never heard of such a thing before."

"There is always a first time. Can you give me satisfactory proof that you live up to the terms of your agreement that you make with your tenants? Can you satisfy me that you give steam heat whenever it is asked for. Is there always hot water? Do you make necessary repairs when defects in the gas or the plumbing are brought to your notice? How many tenants have you in the building?"

"Six."

"Will you refer me to any one of the six as to your trustworthiness in the particulars I have mentioned?"

The agent hesitated a moment, and then began to bluster. Mr. Bentley cut him short.

"Good day!" said Mr. Bentley. "I have had some experience with landlords, and I made up my mind some time ago that what is sauce for the goose in sauce for the gander!"

Circus Man—I can give you a job hauling water to the animals.

Joey Bo—Have you got any dat don't get very thirsty?

The Runaway.

The rector was sitting in his study hard at work on the following Sunday's sermon, when a visitor was announced.

She was a hard muscular-looking woman, and when the minister set a chair for her she opened fire somewhat brusquely:

"You are Mr. Jenkins, ain't you?"

"I am," replied the good man.

"Well, maybe you'll remember o' marryin' a couple of strangers at your church a month ago?"

"What were the names?" asked the clergyman.

"Peter Simpson and Eliza Brown," replied the woman, "and I'm Eliza."

"Are you, indeed?" said the minister. "I thought I remembered seeing your face before, but——"

"Yes," interrupted the visitor. "I'm her, all right, an' I thought as how I ought to drop in an' tell you that Peter's escaped."

Minister's Usefulness.

Among the members of a fashionable country club of Washington are a doctor and a minister, who delight in the exchange of repartee touching their respective professions.

As they met one day, the minister observed that he was "going to read to old Cunningham," adding (as he was aware that the old man was a patient of his friend, the doctor), "is he much worse?"

With the gravest of expressions, the physician replied:

"He needs your help more than mine."

Off his guard, the minister exclaimed, anxiously: "Poor fellow! Is it as bad as that?"

"Yes; he is suffering from insomnia."

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The Winning of Mary.

(Continued from page three.)

that under the light of those admiring blue eyes I must have done the labor of several men that afternoon.

When evening came we had a rough house fashioned from boards, with an actual door that had once belonged to some ship's cabin, and which I fixed so that she could fasten it on the inside, in order that she might feel secure from wild varmints and the like. When I showed her this she looked straight in my eyes and thanked me; but I stand ready to swear that she saw only the most respectful admiration there, and nothing to grieve her gentle and trusting spirit.

On the morrow I meant to build an addition to the shack, for my own occupancy, and if the stuff held out, a sort of livingroom besides, where we could eat our meals in wet weather.

That night we fared well, for Mary Smith seemed to be determined to show me that if I excelled as a boss carpenter and builder of palaces out of slabs and remnants from wrecked vessels, she could also perform a star part in the culinary line; and while from the whiteness of her dainty little hands one would never suspect that she had ever soiled them peeling potatoes, or with the manifold duties that attend cooking, I never sat down to a meal that appealed one-half so much to my appetite as that first supper in our island camp; and I told her so, too, with the utmost frankness, at which she laughed a little; but I could see that she was immensely pleased, simply because she believed I was sincere.

We had not seen a single living soul throughout the whole day; but unknown to Mary I had discovered footprints in the sand that gave me quite as much anxiety as those found by Robinson at the time the savages landed on his island; for the fact was patent that somewhere not far distant there must be a nest of those piratical devils who have made their name a terror along this coast, and at any time we might expect to have them descend upon us.

I made sure to have all my firearms carried into the shack, and much of that evening I spent in overhauling and loading the same, determined at least to give the rascals a hot reception if ever they found us out.

Of course she knew more or less of what was on my mind; but she was too sensible to show any signs of fear; indeed, she declared that at the very earliest opportunity she wanted me to teach her how to shoot, though confessing that already she knew something of the use of firearms, as she once had a brother, now dead, who was a devoted sportsman in England.

This little fact gave me several things to think over—the first was that in all probability Mary must be English by birth; and the other was in connection with how her brother could ever have found opportunity to do any hunting, since I knew people in the lower circles never get a chance to use a gun over there, unless as gamekeepers or poachers; and as I would not like to think of a relative of hers in the latter class, it stood to reason that he must have been employed by some wealthy gentleman to watch over his preserves and shoot hawks and owls that threatened to prey upon the growing birds.

That night was as quiet as the preceding one had been stormy. After the little lady of the castle had said good night, and retired into her own private part of the establishment, I went out to patrol the beach a while, carrying a Marlin repeater over my shoulder, you may be sure; it was my desire to look out to sea, and at the same time observe how things were going ashore; for somehow I seemed to have a deep-rooted fear that we might have been observed by some spy in the daytime, who would bring down the enemies upon us during the night hours.

But all seemed peaceful, and I smoked my pipe, filled with damp tobacco found in a washed-up case, my thoughts went out to the many reasons I had for feeling grateful to an All-wise Providence for casting my lines in such pleasant places; for it seemed that if ever the thought of being cast adrift in the eyes of some girl whom I madly worshiped had occurred to me in my most romantic moods, that opportunity was even now within my grasp.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

Just Her Style.

Her age may have been thirty. She was not pretty—far from it. Her figure was awkward and angular and her face and hair, both of the same neutral tint, seemed to merge one into the other. She sat stiff and motionless in the little millinery shop, her hands crossed in her lap, her colorless lips loosely parted and her pale blue eyes staring vacantly ahead of her. Behind her and quite out of range of her vision hung the mirror; in front of her stood a short, elderly woman with a determined face, who regarded each hat as it was brought forth with a look of eager hopefulness, which invariably changed to that of disappointment as one after another they were placed upon the young woman's passive head.

"These are all women's hats!" she exclaimed at last, with an impatient sigh, "far too old for her. Haven't you any young girl's hats?" Still the vacant blue eyes continued to stare into space and the mouth hung loosely open. "Here's one," said the milliner hopefully, displaying a dainty, flower-trimmed hat, "perhaps she would like this——"

"She like it!" interrupted the elderly woman. "It don't make any difference whether she likes it or not. I'm the one to be suited. Put it on."

The pale eyes turned toward the hat for an instant, and then were averted.

The elderly woman stepped to the left to get a side view of the passive face. "No, that won't do. She don't look well in it. Take it off. Haven't you——"

"Only this," and the milliner despairingly, stretching forth her hand and taking from the top of the showcase a wonderful and unique creation of vivid scarlet satin and white lace, a thing that would have killed the color in the rosiest cheeks and dulled the brilliance of the brightest eyes. "Perhaps this——"

"Ah!" exclaimed the elderly woman approvingly.

"Oh!" breathed she of the pale eyes, suddenly coming to life. "I like red! It's my color, isn't it, ma?"

"Yes, you usually look pretty in red," was the tolerant response. "Put it on her," to the milliner. "Yes," half closing her eyes to get a more concentrated effect and nodding her head approvingly, "that's certainly just her style."

"Wouldn't you like to look in the mirror?" asked the milliner.

"No, it isn't necessary," replied the elderly woman. "I like it; that's enough. You can put it aside for me and I will come in this afternoon with one of her young friends whose taste is good, and if she likes the hat I will take it."

"Oh, I hope Lorena'll like it. Do you think she will?" murmured the pale-eyed one, to whom the hat seemed to have lent inspiration, as the two left the shop. "Red is my color, and the hat is just my style, isn't it ma?"

* * *

A Peer for a Minute.

On one occasion a gentlemanly appearing individual walked boldly up the steps of St. Stephen's, passed the various officials, turned into the House of Lords passage and in a self-possessed manner entered the robing-room.

"Lord Normanby's robes."

The attendant looked surprised.

"But, my lord——" he began.

"I know it's absurd," said the stranger, "but my tailor cannot finish my robes in time and I must attend this sitting. Lord Normanby was so kind as to offer— You understand?"

"Oh, certainly, my lord," responded the rober.

The crimson and ermine was produced and donned and the pseudo peer strolled into the House, where a few peers were waiting, administered a series of affable nods right and left and finally took his place on the woolsack.

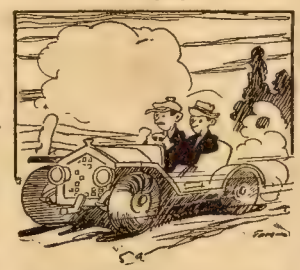
For full thirty seconds he sat there while those present tried to collect their faculties. Then he slowly arose, and, remarking to the clerk. "How stupid of me! I now remember I have an appointment elsewhere," retired from the chamber. In the robing-room he remarked, "Thank Lord Normanby and tell his lordship I have just recalled a pressing appointment with the King."

"Yes, my lord. What name?"

"What name?" echoed the other, in assumed astonishment. "What name? Really, my good fellow, you must be careful. It does not do to forget yourself in this assembly. But I will overlook your slip this time. Good morning."

That evening it was known at the Beefsteak Club that Banister, the actor, had won a bet of $250.

* * *



Sparks—Why did you plead guilty to running your car sixty miles an hour if you were only going twelve?

Chugg—The Judge is a friend of mine and I'm trying to sell him the car.

* * *

Days of Grace.

"It's Tuesday, isn't it?" said one of the boys.

"Naw, it's Wednesday," answered his younger brother, scornfully. "Can't you tell?"

"How'd I know?"

"By the way pa asks the blessin'. Sunday, when it's a big roast o' beef, he begins, 'Most Bountiful Lord.' Monday, when it's cold slices, he starts 'For what we may receive.' Tuesday, when it's hash, he says, 'Lord help us to be grateful.'"

"Then how did you know this was Wednesday?"

"'Cause it was stew, an' pa said: 'Mother, the children are makin' so much noise that we'll dispense with grace. Dish out whatever you got!"

* * *

Was Easier.

H. G. Wells, on his last visit to America, said that race suicide was too far advanced to be eradicated, save by the endowment of motherhood.

"When I look at race suicide," Mr. Wells declared to a Boston reporter, "and when I listen to Mr. Roosevelt's railings against it, I think of my garden at Sandgate.

"'Herb,' said my wife, one spring day, 'I wish you'd weed out the flower bed.'

"I went immediately. But I soon returned.

"'My dear,' I said, 'it would be easier to flower out the weed bed.'"

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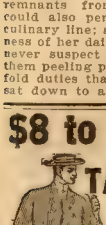

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GENTLE JABS.

It's a wise old saw if it has wisdom teeth.

Some things that come to pass are vetoed.

The man who can please himself is easily pleased.

It's almost as easy to grow old as it is to grow fat.

The man who steals a watch ought to wind up in jail.

Money sometimes talks when you want to keep it quiet.

Training up a child in the way he should go is going some.

But a man who leads a double life never does two men's work.

A man never complains of his wife's relations—if she hasn't any.

A woman never smiles more naturally than when she wants to cry.

Many a woman who has but little to say keeps saying it all the time.

Some men never brag about themselves—and we don't blame them.

Every cloud may have a silver lining, but it's always on the other side.

Most men are willing to forgive and forget—if the price is satisfactory.

Many a woman lets her neighbors' affairs worry her more than her own.

Like begets like—when fishing for compliments bait your hook with one.

It's difficult for a man to practice economy and be popular at the same time.

Before marriage he escorts her to church; after marriage she has to drag him there.

A woman can get a man to do anything she wants him to if she has tact enough to induce him to talk about himself.

Don't look for a needle in a haystack if you want to patch up a quarrel. There will be no occasion for the patch by the time you find the needle.

It isn't any wonder that a man is annoyed when he gets the worst of a horse trade, as that was what he was trying to hand the other fellow.

There is said to be a woman in Ohio who can actually sharpen a lead pencil so well that it doesn't look as if she had done it with her teeth.

The mere fact that you are having a good time while you are young won't necessarily keep you out of the county infirmary when you get old.

The Disappearing Gold

(Contined from page seven.)

stones that told of heavy weight. It was followed by another and another. I made out what it meant mighty quick. The old man was heaping stones against the ventilator. He didn't intend that I should crawl away by that means.

But his blockade gave me an idea. It's a wonder I hadn't thought of it before, but it's no lie to say the ache in my noodle had disarranged my thinking apparatus. Anyway, I grabbed up hammer and chisel and screw-driver and set to work to loosen the stones in the wall about the ventilator. I was sure I could make an opening large enough to let myself out and get away.

But I had to work slowly because I had to work quietly. It would not do to alarm Hawthorne. He'd quickly put a stop to my scheme. Another thing worried me. My watch marked four o'clock. Daylight would soon be coming on, and I wouldn't dare to try to escape then. If I did, I'd be likely to have to run the gauntlet of a revolver or a shotgun, and they do say that's almighty unpleasant sometimes.

My worries in that direction, however, were needless. For just as the first slant of light seeped through from outside, I heard a commotion above stairs. Some one was at the trapdoor.

I ceased work, extinguished the flame in the spirit lamp and crouched quite still against the wall. I clutched the hammer in one hand and a small piece of stone I had dislodged in the other. They made me feel that I wasn't entirely unarmed. Suddenly the door was shoved aside, and Hawthorne, raspy and venomous, shouted down at me:

"So you think you're going to get away through the wall, do you? Well, I guess not."

I didn't reply at once. I was hot because my scheme to escape had been discovered. I peered across the gloom of the vault to the shaft of yellow light that fell through the doorway from the room above. Then I got up and made for it in a hurry.

"Now, see here," I began, taking my stand at the foot of the ladder, "hadn't you and I better argue this thing a bit? You know this is likely to get you into a heap of trouble."

"Argue it a bit?" he came back at me, sarcastically. "Argue with a housebreaker?"

"I'm not a housebreaker," I disputed. "I'm a newspaper reporter in search of a story."

"You've got it, too, haven't you?" There was hatred in his voice, so hot that I could really feel it. "But you can make up your mind right now that you're not going to print it."

"I can pull this place down over your head if you don't treat me right," I declared.

A raucous laugh was the only reply. Then I heard him turn from the hole and call: "Here, Jocko."

That same strange tap-tap that had puzzled me before sounded across the floor.

"Down, Jocko, and at him," I heard Hawthorne urge. Then through the opening shot the bullet head and the nimble body of a black ape.

With a snarl the animal fastened upon my shoulders. I could feel its hot breath against my neck. Its greenish-yellow eyes looked hatefully into mine.

Like a reel of moving pictures, it all came to me in a flash. Those eyes were the same I had seen when I first peered into the house. These agile feet explained the pat-pat I had heard above stairs. That heap of bedding in the vault here was the animal's bed.

I raised the hand that held the hammer to strike a blow at the ape, but before I could bring it down, I felt its sharp claws break the skin at my shoulders. Then its teeth sank into my neck.

I wasn't afraid. I was boiling mad. The perspiration burst out all over me. To think that that cuss above stairs would set a monkey upon me. I'd show him, I'd brain the beast.

But that was more than one man's job. I brought the hammer down upon the ape's back. It only snarled more viciously and clawed me worse. I tried to fasten my fingers in its neck, but the smooth skin slipped away. I could feel the blood dripping away from the wound in my neck. I fell back and tried to shake the rabid thing off. But it clung like a plaster. The claws on its hind feet broke through my trousers and tore the flesh at my thighs.

I threw my arms together about its body and tried to squeeze the thing to death. But it only squealed and squirmed. Its bristly hair irritated my face, its hectic breath sickened me. Worst of all, its teeth sank deeper into my neck. It snarled all the time like a voracious dog does over a disputed bone.

I felt for the fence myself against the wall. My legs began to feel a bit unsteady. My stomach grew squeamish. My head began to whirl dizzily. I dropped the hammer to put out my arm to catch something that would prevent me from falling, but I only grasped the black, close air.

The wound in my neck began to pain horribly. I felt myself growing weak and staggery, as I heard this hideous thing withdraw its teeth from my flesh, lick its blue lips, and then sink its bite deeper into my neck.

Once I cried out for help. But I couldn't recognize the voice as my own it was so choked with agony. Once I glanced up at the shaft of light falling through the hole in the floor. But I looked away with a new horror, for framed in the trap doorway was the face of Hawthorne, hateful as that of a smiling devil.

My limbs trembled anew, my brain whirled faster, my pain grew more excruciating, I lost control of my feet. They seemed to be inert bits of bone. My breath came in short, excited pants as the claws of the ape pressed deeper into my throat. And all the time the fiendish yellow-green eyes of the beast glowed diabolically, as it withdrew its teeth from my neck, licked its lips unctuously, and then pressed its horrid mouth deeper into my neck.

The gloom of the vault turned so black that I could not see. My arms fell lifeless. My knees began to bend. I choked in vain for breath. I tried to fight off the increasing lethargy. But it was as if a palsy had attacked me in every muscle.

I tried to voice one final, despairing cry, but the pressure at my throat throttled it. A vise couldn't have shut my breath off any better. Then I felt my limbs crumple and my frame sink shiveringly upon the hard, chill floor. My last recollection was of a step hurriedly descending the ladder and of the hot breath of the devilish ape, as it sunk its teeth deeper into the flesh of my neck.

The conclusion of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

* * *

A Lawn Mower.

"Harris' cow broke into our garden and ate all the grass off the lawn."

"What did he do about it?"

"Sent us a bill for using his cow as a lawn mower."

* * *

Suitable.

"Could you suggest some suitable badge for our 'Don't Worry' Club?" asked the typewriter boarder.

"How would a pine-knot do?" asked the Cheerful Idiot.

* * *

J. P.

Those suffering from weakness and lack of vigor should take JUVEN PILLS. One box will tell a story of marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1. Made by its originators, C. I. HOOD CO., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, LOWELL, MASS. (2)

* * *

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

WANT ADS

Want and Classified Advertising not less than 14 words accepted for insertion in the Ledger and Blade at 25 cents per word.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS on salary or commission. The greatest agent's seller ever produced; every user of pen and ink buys it on sight; 200 to 500 per cent profit; one agent's sales amounted to $620 in six days; another $32 in two hours. Monroe Mfg. Co., X 96, La Crosse, Wis.

AGENTS to sell Novelty Pencil that supplies its own memorandum paper. Sample and catalogue of latest novelties, 20 cents. Henry Dines, Brattleboro, Vt.

AGENTS—Our specialties are rapid fire sellers. Write for catalog and sample. Territory protected. Box No. 788, Jacksonville, Florida.

SALESMEN making small towns, just what you want for pocket sideline. Something new, snappy and catchy. Quick shipments, prompt commissions. State territory covered. Write for order book today. Burd Mfg. Co., 212 Sigel St., Chicago.

$3.00 to $5.00 per day selling our family medicines. We trust you and help you build a business all your own. Free samples. Write today. Ecktone Co., St. Louis, Mo.

WANTED Agents to sell rich looking Imported 36x68 rugs. $1 each. R. H. Carter, Milan, Tenn., sold 115 in four days. His profit $53. You can do as well. Write for sample offer and unique selling plan. Exclusive territory. Condon, Importer, Stoneton, Maine.

AGENTS—Both Sexes—Just out. The best yet. Get territory quick. Belden Supply Co., 17 East Lake st., Chicago.

$250.00 paid for distributing 2,000 free packages Perfumed Soap Powder in your town. Men or women. No money required. B. W. Ward & Co., 1770 Berteau ave., Chicago.

FIVE dollars per hundred for collecting names and addresses. All or spare time, stamp for particulars. Penn Sales Co., Darby, Pa.

STARK BRO'S, Louisiana, Mo., Big Idea in tree selling. Best terms known to nursery world. Box 80.

AGENTS' Repeater, costs 5c, sells for 50c to $1. Sample free. Thornber Laboratory, Ferris, Illinois.

AGENTS—Men and Women; sell guaranteed Hosiery. Credit plan helps you. The line that repeats. Exclusive agency to hustlers. Dept. B-1., Lehr Mfg. Co., Denver, Colo.

PORTRAITS—Photo pillow tops, photo china plates, frames, sheet pictures, etc., at prices below the lowest and guaranteed. Rejects credited. Prompt shipments; 20 days' credit, catalogue and samples free. Jas. C. Bailey Co., K-2, Chicago

FARMS FOR SALE

FRUIT LANDS—Beautiful Kootenay Valley, B. C., 5-acres, subdivided into 3 4-acre tracts, 11 of 5-acres and one of 25 acres. The 25-acre tract is improved, has dwelling, stable, tea-house, etc. All for a limited time at the low price of $6,000. Adjoining land held at $200 per acre. Will cost you nothing to write and investigate. Owner forced to realize thereon. ¼ cash, balance easy terms. Only six hours from Spokane, Wash. Pure water, ideal climate and very low taxes. Address D. B. Dulmage, Morgan Park, Illinois.

PATENTS

PATENTS That Protect—Patent your ideas; they may bring you wealth; 64 page book free. Fitz Gerald & Co., Dept. W, Washington, D. C.

PROTECTIVE Patents procured promptly. Our books telling how to obtain and realize therefrom sent on request. Write today. Trade Marks Registered. Beeler & Robb, 348 Southern Bldg., Washington, D. C.

MUSICAL.

LESSON in Piano tuning, your start, free with beautiful two-step, 10c. Phoenix Music Co., La Crosse, Wis.

MISCELLANEOUS

PICTURES, Drugs, Books, etc., Gentlemen like. 30 samples 10c postage. List 2c. Ord., Long Beach, Calif.

NEW book "Kate," 10c. Catalog books and den pictures free. Atos Co., A-1, West Jefferson, Ohio.

BARGAIN—Three fine necktles $1. Gold plated Pin free. Ties and pin retail at $2.50. This offer is for short time only. Send $1 at once. Money refunded by return mail if not satisfied. Name colors desired. W. C. Watkins, Parnassus, Pa.

HELP WANTED

RAILWAY Mail Clerks, Letter Carriers, Custom House Clerks wanted. Good Pay, fine positions. Write for our easy payment tuition plan. Liberty Institute, Rochester, N. Y.

QUALIFY as expert detective and investigator. Plenty of work at big pay. Stamp for particulars. Dept. L, National Detective Agency, Chicago.

WANTED—5,000 Untrained Young Men. Prepare for Secret Service. Fascinating life. Thousands of Dollars Yearly. Write: Secret Service, Martinsville, Virginia.

LEARN the Barber Trade. Few weeks completes. We control many excellent positions. Tools given. Branches in all leading cities. For information regarding any one, write Dept. 10, Moler College, 738 South Wabash ave., Chicago, Ill.

SOUND men, 20 to 40 years old, wanted at once in every State for Electric Railway Motormen and Conductors; $60 to $100 month; no experience necessary; fine opportunity; no strike; write immediately for application blank. Address Mgr. Z., 562 Dwight Building, Kansas City, Missouri.

WANTED. Post Office Clerks, City and Rural Carriers. Thousands needed. Examinations soon. Trial examination Free. Write Today. Ozment, K, St. Louis.

GOVERNMENT farmers wanted. $60 monthly. Free living quarters. Write today. Ozment, 68 P, St. Louis.

WANTED—Reliable man in each locality who is interested in lodge work, either as president, secretary, deputy or member. If you know something about lodge work, how it is started, how to extend it, and would like to turn that knowledge into some good money during your spare moments, write immediately to Box G-409, Cincinnati, Ohio.

GOVERNMENT Post Office Examinations everywhere soon. Get prepared by former U. S. Civil Service Examiner. Write for Booklet B. Patterson Civil Service School, Rochester, N. Y.

WANTED—Men and women for Government positions. $80.00 month. Annual vacations. Short hours. No "layoffs." Common education sufficient. Over 12,000 appointments coming. Influence unnecessary. Farmers eligible. Send postal immediately for free list of positions open. Franklin Institute, Dept. D 81, Rochester, N. Y.

WANTED—Active man in each locality. To join this Society. And introduce our Memberships. Sick, accident, death benefits. All or spare time. $25 to $50 a week a month. Write. Box N. L.-293, Covington, Ky.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

LADIES can make shields at home; $10 per 100; work sent prepaid to reliable women. Particulars for stamped addressed envelope. Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

MAKE a comfortable living at home sewing by plain seams. Any ordinary sewing machine. All or spare time. No canvassing. Steady. Sewers wanted in each town. No triflers reply. State how much time can sew. Send ten cents for postage samples, etc. Returned if not satisfactory. Home Sewers Company, New York Jobbers Sewing. 'BL' Dept. Rehoboth, Delaware.

PERSONAL

A HAPPY Marriage for You? Many are happily married, why not you? Get new idea. Free. Denver Social Circle, Box 1589, Denver, Colo.

MARRY—Best plan on earth, sent free photo of every lady member. The Pilot, Dept. 674, Marshall, Mich.

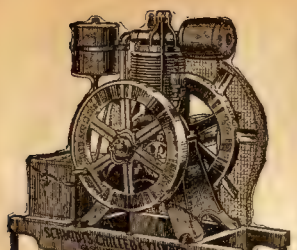
MARRY, thousands wealthy, anxious for early marriage, descriptions free. Confidential, 268 Market, San Francisco, Calif.

LOVINE never fails. Every package guaranteed. Either sex 10c. Two packages sealed 20c. Union, Box 100N, Palatine, Illinois.

MARRY Rich—Matrimonial paper of highest character, containing hundreds of photos and descriptions of many elegible people with means; mailed free, sealed: either sex. Write. One may be your ideal. Standard Cor. Club, Box 607, Grays Lake, Illinois.

MARRIAGE paper free; best published for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 55, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

MARRY—Photos, descriptions and P. O. address of scores of pretty, rich ladies and gents, want to marry, free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.



$7.50 and You Keep This Great Engine

We will ship you Schmidt's Chilled Cylinder Gasoline Engine on your simple request without an order or any promise from you. You use the engine 10 whole days. Then if you don't want it send it back at our expense. If you do wish to keep it, pay us **only $7.50 and you can pay the rest in the easiest monthly payments**

WE SEND YOU THE ENGINE FREE to prove to you that it is the greatest 2-horse-power engine on earth. Also your choice of 1½ H. P. and 1 H. P. engines. We want you to see for yourself that it is better than any other engine that costs twice and three times as much. It is the only engine that has the marvelous, powerful **chilled cylinder.** The only engine for farm use with a **spark retarder.** The new type gasoline engine that has revolutionized the gasoline engine industry.

Ten Days Trial FREE

This is the first genuine free trial ever offered on gasoline engines for farm and shop use. We want you to see that women and children can run this engine. Use the engine to run the pump, churn and any other machinery you own here. Schmidt's Chilled Cylinder Gasoline Engine is absolutely **guaranteed for five years** in every part. The biggest bank in Iowa backs our $1000 challenge offer on our engines. Write to us promptly for particulars and we will send you a copy of our new book, "How to Use Power," free and postpaid. Write to us today.

SCHMIDT BROS. CO. ENGINE WORKS
DEPARTMENT 601 Y DAVENPORT, IOWA

To Women Who Dread Motherhood

Information How They May Give Birth To Happy, Healthy Children Absolutely Without Fear of Pain—Sent FREE

No woman need any longer dread the pains of childbirth. Dr. J. H. Dye devoted his life to relieving the sorrows of women. He has proved that the pain at childbirth need no longer be feared by woman and we will gladly tell you how it may be done absolutely free of charge. Send your name and address to Dr. J. H. Dye Medical Institute, 200 Lewis Block, Buffalo, N. Y., and we will send you, postpaid, his wonderful book which tells how to give birth to happy, healthy children, absolutely without fear of pain, also how to become a mother. Do not delay, but write TO-DAY.

Made to Order $7.50

Most Amazing Suit Offer
Linings Guaranteed for Two Years!

Made to your individual measure from any selection of cloth, in any style and guaranteed to fit you perfectly. Our suits are made by the only system in the world, which insures perfect fit, and are not approached in price, variety of style, quality of materials, trimmings and workmanship by any other house. We save you half on any clothes you buy.

Startling Agency Offer

Write us and we will send you absolutely free, complete sample outfit, and large selection of cloth samples, latest fashion illustrations, order blank, tape measure, complete instructions how to take measurements. We will show you how easy it is to get into a well paying business. Hundreds of our agents are making from $5.00 to $15.00 a day. You need no money or experience—we furnish you everything to start. You can make good money using spare time only. Profit on two orders pays for your own suit.

The Capitol Tailors
Dept. 800, Monroe and Market Sts. Chicago

PILES CURED AT HOME BY NEW ABSORPTION METHOD.

If you suffer from bleeding, itching, blind or protruding Piles, send me your address, and I will tell you how to cure yourself at home by the new absorption treatment; and will also send some of this home treatment free for trial, with references from your own locality if requested. Immediate relief and permanent cure assured. Send no money, but tell others of this offer. Write today to Mrs. M. Summers, Box 657, South Bend, Ind.

Elegant Thin Model 20 YEAR Watch $3.75

Stunning case beautifully engraved, gold finished throughout, stem wind and stem set, fitted with 7 jeweled American lever movement, guaranteed 20 years, with long gold finished chain for Ladies, vest chain or fob for Gents.

$3.75

Guaranteed 20 Years
IF YOU SEE IT YOU WILL BUY IT. Let us send it C.O.D. for examination at your nearest express office, and if you think it a bargain and equal in appearance to any $15.00 gold finished watch pay the express agent our special sale price $3.75. Mention if you want Ladies', Men's or Boys' size.
Diamond Jewelry Co., 175, 189 W. Madison St. Chicago, Ill.

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

Just in Time.

An Arkansas judge had convened court at one of the towns on his circuit when it was found that no pens, ink or paper had been provided, and upon inquiry it came out that no county funds were available for the purpose.

The judge exclaimed somewhat forcefully, then drew some money from his own pocket. He was about to hand it to the clerk when a visiting lawyer, a high-priced imported article brought on to defend a case of some importance, spoke up in an aside plainly audible over the room:

"Well!" with infinite contempt. "I've seen some pretty bad conditions, but this—well, this is the limit!"

"You are fined $5 for contempt, sir!" thundered the judge. "Hand the money to the clerk."

When the eminent lawyer had humbly complied, the judge turned to the clerk:

"Now, Mr. Clerk, go out and get what pens, ink and paper the court may require, and if there is any change left over you may give it to the gentleman."

The Second String.

Mrs. Bache Conde, suffragist, was talking about a former leader who had deserted her party when ill fortune befell it.

"She deserted her party shamelessly," said Mrs. Conde. "She reminded me of a beautiful New York girl.

"Her fiance faltered in this girl's ear one evening:

"'My dear, I have been deceiving you. I am not the manager of our concern at eight thousand dollars a year, but only a humble clerk at nine dollars a week. Will this make any difference to you?'

"The girl lifted her golden head from his breast with a slight start.

"'No, it will make no difference,' she said.

"'Not the least difference, darling?'

"'Not the least,' she replied, rising and smoothing her hair. 'Old Gobsa Golde's proposal still holds good. I'll wire him at his Fifth Avenue residence this evening.'"

The Legal Costs.

The Judge—You say you don't get your alimony?

The Complainant—I don't get it all, your honor. It's only $5 a week, and I need every cent of it.

The Judge—And what's the reason you get only part of the amount?

The Complainant—It's because my former husband sends it to me by a lawyer, and the lawyer charges me car fare, brokerage, transportation and time—and that leaves only ninety cents.

Trying to Please.

Wife (in railway train)—It's mortifying to have you act so. Why don't you get up and help that young lady raise that window?

Dutiful Husband—She's so pretty I was afraid you'd be mad.

He Rebelled.

"No power on earth shall make me do it!" he declared, firmly. She approached close to his side.

Her eyes blazed into his and her lips sneered.

"You shall do it! However you dread it, it must be done! You hear me?"

"I refuse utterly! Such a thing is unworthy for a man of pride and honor to undertake!" he repeated, drawing back from her as from a whiplash.

Quickly she was at his side again, gripping his arm with fingers slim, but hard as steel.

She slipped a small knife into his hand—a thin, sharp-pointed piece of steel. "There!" she said. His obstinacy was momentarily driving her to desperation.

Her voice broke with passion and she cried, in a loud, angry tone: "William Tomkins, if you don't do what I say and go peel those potatoes at once you'll go to bed without any dinner!"

Reason.

Husband (who arrives at the station with his wife in time to see the train go out)—There you are; if you had hurried yourself more we should not have missed it.

Wife—Yes, and if you had not hurried so much we should not have to wait so long for the next one.

A Pleasant Reminder.

Tom—I don't know a thing I wouldn't do for you.

Grace—Then you will have mother and father come and live with us?

Tom—Good you reminded me; but I don't know of anything else I wouldn't do for you.

Hard to Satisfy.

Life guards at a Jersey seaside resort tell with great glee of an incident that happened there last summer. A German, with his boy of 10 years, was standing at the rail of one of the piers, quite at the end thereof, when suddenly the youngster toppled through into the water. As no life guards were out that far at the time, a well-dressed young collegian on the pier, without waiting to divest himself of shoes or clothing, jumped in and after battling with the waves for some minutes got the half-drowned boy to the beach. In the meantime the father had hastened from the pier.

The parent, however, bore himself with great coolness. As the rescuer placed the dripping lad at his parent's feet the German calmly inquired:

"Many thanks, but vot half you done mit his hat?"

The Simple Answer.

Reginald C. Vanderbilt, at a luncheon at Sandy Point farm, said of a well-known suffragist:

"She accomplishes a great deal, but some of her methods are not quite fair. Why, even at home——"

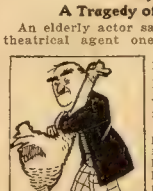
Mr. Vanderbilt smiled.

"A man once inquired of her husband: 'Do you give your wife an allowance, or does she ask for money when she wants it?'

"'Both,' was the simple answer."

A Tragedy of the Stage.

An elderly actor said, in despair, to a theatrical agent one day:



"Is there nothing you can do for me? I've hung around your office, out of work, for eight months, now."

The agent, as he polished his diamond ring with his red silk handkerchief, answered thoughtfully:

"Look here, bring yourself up to date. The turkey trot is all the go. You train some animal or bird to do the turkey trot with you, and I'll get you on one of the circuits at a three-figure salary."

The old actor thanked the agent gratefully. He bought an ostrich from a retired circus man, and, after a lot of hard work, he taught the bird to turkey trot with him splendidly. Then he reported himself to the agent again.

But the agent, for all his promises, had nothing to offer. The poor fellow turned up every day for a while, then every other day, then every third day; but there was nothing doing; and at last week went by without his appearance at the agent's office.

Then the agent sent for him, and said:

"Well, I've fixed you up at last. I've booked you for that turn of yours at ——." But the old actor interrupted sadly:

"It's too late now," he said.

"Too late? How is it too late?" said the agent, frowning.

"I've had to eat my partner," muttered the old actor.

Good.

"He has a good wife, hasn't he?"

"I should say so. He can always borrow money from her when he goes broke himself."

Got Rid of It Somehow.

Conceited Actor—Yes, I inherited my talent.

Candid Friend—I see. And you dissipated your inheritance.

Velvet

THE SMOOTHEST TOBACCO

Not just the ordinary kind.

It's different—and it's proper aging that makes the difference.

A long time in the warehouse for every Burley leaf, before it's ready for Velvet.

—and the best Burley at that—the cream of Kentucky's crop—cut from the middle of the plant.

Result—unusually good smoking properties. Richness, mellowness and mildness and *no* bite or burn.

Get a tin.

At your dealer's 10c

SPAULDING & MERRICK

(Stock owned by Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co.)

Trusses Like These Are a Crime

GET RID OF STRAPS AND SPRINGS AND BE CURED

Simply write for our free cloth-bound Book of Advice containing facts which took us 40 years of day-after-day experience to learn. Book explains why drug stores should not be allowed to sell their misery-making trusses. Explains the dangers of operations and why it is no longer necessary. Exposes the humbug "discoveries," "appliances," "plasters," "systems," etc., and puts you on guard against throwing money away.

Book tells how the wonderful Cluthe Self-Massaging Pad Cures Rupture by strengthening the weakened muscles, while holding continuously with ease. **Sent on 60 days' trial to prove it,** how it is waterproof, no legstraps, no springs, how it ends constant expense on account of rupture. 5,000 public indorsements sent with the book.

After you have read this book you'll know more about your condition than if you had gone to a dozen doctors. You'll know how to get immediate relief without risking a penny.

Just use the coupon, or simply say in a letter or postal "Send me the Book."

Box 25—CLUTHE COMPANY
125 East 23rd Street, New York City

Name .....

Address .....

Return mail brings World's Greatest Rupture Book.

THE BEST YET OFFER

And Your Own Clothes FREE

Write at once and get our wonderful *free* offer. We have finest and best materials; most beautiful patterns; swellest styles; lowest prices. You can make *more* money easier with us than with any other concern—many agents earning $30 to $90 a week *now*. Why not you?

Your Suit Absolutely FREE

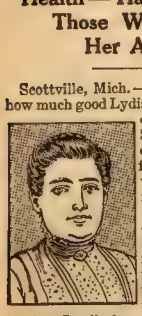
Yes, *FREE*. This is more than a mere promise. We send you facts and proofs. We actually give away swell brand new, made-to-measure suits to our agents. No money or experience needed. We furnish everything you need to make a big success *absolutely free*. Most astounding offer—will sure open your eyes—biggest and most pleasant surprise of your life waiting for you. Most liberal offer; best selling helps. Write now—today—a postal will do. Everything Express Prepaid.

ERB TAILORING CO., Dept. 15
229 S. Desplaines St., Chicago

$5.00 to $15.00 a Day

MOTHER OF LARGE FAMILY

Tells How She Keeps Her Health — Happiness For Those Who Take Her Advice.



Scottville, Mich.—"I want to tell you how much good Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and Sanative Wash have done me. I live on a farm and have worked very hard. I am forty-five years old, and am the mother of thirteen children. Many people think it strange that I am not broken down with hard work and the care of my family, but I tell them of my good friend, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and that there will be no backache and bearing down pains for them if they will take it as I have. I am scarcely ever without it in the house.

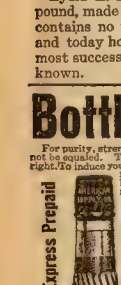
"I will say also that I think there is no better medicine to be found for young girls. My eldest daughter has taken Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for painful periods and irregularity, and it has helped her.

"I am always ready and willing to speak a good word for Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I tell every one I meet that I owe my health and happiness to your wonderful medicine." —Mrs. J. G. JOHNSON, Scottville, Mich., R.F.D. 3.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from native roots and herbs, contains no narcotics or harmful drugs, and today holds the record of being the most successful remedy for woman's ills known.

Bottle DIXIE CHEER Free

For purity, strength and flavor, *Ullman's Whiskey* cannot be equaled. The first drink will convince you we are right. To induce you to try it, we offer, absolutely free, with first order, a bottle of *Dixie Cheer*, a beverage of surpassing quality, and a miniature bottle of rare *Athletic Club Whiskey*. Here is our wonderful offer:



4 Full Quart Bottles Ullman's Whiskey $2.85

8 Full Quart Bottles Ullman's Whiskey $5.00

ONE BOTTLE DIXIE CHEER 1 Sample Old Athletic Club with each 4 Quart Order FREE for ULLMAN'S WHISKEY

EXPRESS PREPAID

Now! Send remittance for $2.85 and we will ship you—express prepaid—four full quart bottles *Ullman's Reserve Stock Whiskey*, one bottle *Dixie Cheer*, and a sample bottle of *Athletic Club*; or remit us $5.00 and we will send you eight full quarts *Ullman's Reserve Stock Whiskey* with two free bottles *Dixie Cheer* and two bottles *Athletic Club*—express prepaid. Test the whiskey, by drinking all you please; if not delighted just return it to us and we will at once refund your money. All goods shipped in plain sealed package. Do not fail to take advantage of this wonderful "Order-to-prove" offer. *Order today!*

AMERICAN SUPPLY CO., 2010 Market St., St. Louis, Mo.

$50 A Week—EASY

Here's the easiest, quickest money you ever heard of. Just send name and address—we will ship—express prepaid—Sweitzer Big Outfit of Samples and Color Plates, showing over 100 correct and latest styles in Men's Made-to-Measure Clothing; also special offer of a free suit to you. We back you to win, no money or experience necessary.

Best Tailoring On Earth

Appeals to every thinking man. Suits and Top Coats, $9.50 up. Pants, $2.50 up. Perfect work guaranteed or money back. Special confidential, inside wholesale prices and guarantee you can undersell all others. You coin money with our goods. We put you in big paying business and take all risk, show you how and give you exclusive territory. Most liberal attractive offer ever made, *bar none!* Your one best chance. Keep this private and write us today.

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THIS SUIT and Big Outfit FREE

PATENTS procured and sold; $100,000 for one invention; $50,000 for another; simple ideas pay; send sketch. BOOK FREE. H. Sanders, 880 Crilly Bldg., Chicago

Our Boys' Corner

The Rival Submarines

Or, Close Play for a Million

By Weldon J. Cobb

[Copyright 1912 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 28, July 13. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

IN PERIL.

THE young detective, as noted, found himself in total darkness inside the lion cage. His movements thus far had been made on surmise and speculation solely. For all that Bob Archer knew, a rampant beast of prey might be lurking in some corner of the cage. Perhaps it was already poised to spring upon him. He held his breath and listened intently.

The only sound his keen ear could catch was low, subdued breathing. It proceeded from one corner of the cage. Bob drew the electric flashlight he always carried with him. With one rapid movement he swept the vivid pencil of radiance around the four sides of the cage.

"Ah!" exclaimed the young detective.

Rapidly he had flashed the light, and as swiftly shut it off, for fear of some stray flash attracting the attention of the men at the campfire. Then, feeling his way to a corner of the cage, he paused. It was there he had seen an instant before a huddled-up human form.

Once more the electric flashlight. Gagged and bound, there lay Bert Noble. His eyes glowed as he seemed to know that his visitor was a friend.

Bob had the young chauffeur released in a minute's time. He helped Bert to his feet, but the latter was so cramped that he had to cling for support to the bars of the cage.

"You—you have found me," were Bert's first gasping words.

"As you see."

"Then the balloons—"

"Did their work. A clever thought, my friend. Sit down, rest till you are stronger, talk low. Tell me about those balloons."

"It was some emissaries of Blauvelt who drugged and kidnaped me," said Bert. "What I have learned from overhearing their talk."

"And Blauvelt himself?" inquired Bob.

"I think they are now taking me to where he is."

"Very good," remarked the young detective, in a resolute way. "We will go with them."

"You intend to do that?" questioned Bert, in some surprise.

Yes. This Blauvelt is a dangerous enemy. By this time he doubtless knows something concerning the Destroyer. He is too dangerous a foe to trust at large."

"When I recovered from the drug they had given me at the hotel," Bert proceeded with his narration, "I found myself in this cage wagon. Only one side, however, was inclosed. The top canvas was off. They allowed nobody to come into the tent. I was not bound and gagged then, as I am now. Early this morning, when I awoke, I discovered a great lot of toy balloons in bunches tied to one of the wheels. Then a plan came to me."

"I can guess it," said Bob.

"I had a lot of cards in my pocket. I wrote a message, naming you and the hotel on them. I attached them to nearly fifty balloons. Then I sent up the whole lot of them."

Bob in turn recited his own adventure to Bert. In the midst of his narration he was interrupted by the sound of voices. There was the jangling of chains and harness buckles.

"They are hitching up to resume the journey," spoke Bob.

"Hello!" he heard a gruff voice outside say. "The chute has come unbolted."

Bob heard a movement under the wagon. Then the cover of the chute through which he had secured ingress to the cage wagon was slammed shut and bolted. The man outside made no comment or investigation as to its condition. Apparently he considered that the bolt had come loose from the jolting movements of the cumbrous vehicle.

The young detective decided on his plan, and imparted its details to his companion. Bob had made up his mind that he would remain in the wagon until it had reached its destination.

"I feel certain that the plan is to deliver you into the hands of Blauvelt," he told Bert.

"I think that, too," assented his comrade.

"We will stay in the wagon until we get to the place where he is."

"And then?" asked Bert.

"We will leave the wagon."

"Leave it?"

"Yes."

"But how?"

"I will prepare for that when we get started up," replied Bob.

They maintained silence now. They could trace the movements of the men outside. The horses were hitched to the vehicle. Then the cage wagon started forward. Its rumbling wheels drowned out the talk of the men high up on the driver's seat. Bob went to the rear of the wagon, and holding the electric flashlight well shadowed by his coat, examined the bars of the cage and the wooden end beyond it.

"What are you planning to do?" Bert asked, curiously, following him and watching his maneuvers.

"You will see shortly," replied Bob. "Here, hold the light, shield it from the front, and follow my hand with its focus."

Bob produced from an inner pocket a little case filled with exquisitely tempered tools. He poured some liquid from a phial upon certain parts of two of the iron bars. Then, producing a steel saw, diminutive in size, but tempered and fashioned to cope with the stoutest metal, he began operations.

At the end of half an hour two sections of two bars four feet in length were out of place.

"I shall loosen the wooden shield," he said. "Then, when the right moment comes, we will make our dash, if we have to."

"Whoa—whoa!"

"Thunder! stop 'em!"

"We're gone, men!"

All of a sudden the cries rang out. The cage prisoners felt the wagon sway, swing and rattle. Its motion was accelerated. Bob could trace what had happened. Abruptly, it seemed, the vehicle had struck a dangerous slant. The driver had lost control of the frightened horses. As the wagon tipped to one side, the men jumped off. Bob could hear their voices to the rear.

"A runaway!" breathed Bert, in some excitement.

"It looks that way," responded Bob.

There was a sharp neigh. Then the wagon swung around and seemed to strike a wall of rock. It was apparent that the pole had snapped and that the horses were free.

"Hold to the bars," shouted Bob.

"We're going over!"

"We're!"

The wagon described a complete tilt. With a crash it landed on its side. Then it slid, half righted, rolled over twice, and struck some hollow planking. It continued its course. There was the sharp crashing of timber.

The wagon had struck a bridge, had swept away its frail side rail, dropping sheer. Splash! A spray of water came, sluicing in between the cracks in the cage coverings. Bang! The rear end of the wagon landed against a rock in mid-stream. Squarely the wooden section Bob had sawed was jolted out of place.

"Hold to me—out of this!" ordered Bob, promptly, as the water poured in like a deluge.

They made a desperate dash through the aperture, a dive once they were outside, came up, clung to the floating section of the cage end, drifted down a dark, swiftly rolling stream for a distance, and then, dripping, bruised, but safe, reached the shore and stood gazing curiously at the bobbing wrecked cage wagon floating rapidly away.

CHAPTER VIII.

CRUISE OF THE SUBMARINE.

Click! That was all—the faintest sound imaginable. The pressure of a finger upon an electric button, and the Destroyer slipped down from her stays into the sea.

It was at midnight, two days after Bob Archer and Bert Noble had scored their sensational and perilous escape from the wrecked cage wagon and the river. Under the stress of discomfort and darkness they had been obliged to abandon the plan of seeking a trace of Blauvelt. They had made an immediate return to the ocean inclosure where the great submarine was in position for its momentous cruise.

Double guards had been placed about the inclosure, for Bob feared some plot on the part of Blauvelt to cripple or destroy the ship. The following day the men he had sent for to man the Destroyer arrived.

There were twelve of them, including Laverne, the noted French expert. Each one of them had known either experimental or permanent service aboard a submarine craft. They fitted into their new places as readily as sailors on an ordinary above-water ship.

It had been arranged to slip away from port quietly and at an hour when the world was asleep. Captain Mann had worked all day seeing to it that every part of the simple yet perfectly working mechanism of the Destroyer was in absolute order. The purser had received and stored away the necessary

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provisions for a long cruise. Bob had spent several hours with Bert, a map spread before them.

This was a most important element in the situation. Bert, as cabin boy of the Ravager, had a fair memory of its progress. He knew its favorite landing points. The general rendezvous of the Rodridgo gang he believed was at Porto Nueva, an obscure point on the Chilean coast.

"Porto Nueva," therefore, was the place marked on the chart for the initial destination of the Destroyer, and so announced.

"Very good," Captain Mann had said simply, with a sanguine bow.

The first mate of the Destroyer was a keen-eyed, intelligent man named Bartley. He had been in the Russian war service, and had charge of the conning tower on the Destroyer. His business was to watch and direct the course of the craft. He sat in front of the "finder" mirror when above water, and by means of electric buttons and call tubes gave orders to every part of the ship.

It was an eager and exciting moment for Bert when the mate shot three spiral spurts of the searchlight up into the air. It was a signal to those in charge of the inclosure to release the stays. It was then that Bert experienced a great thrill. To him a submarine was no novelty, but a first experiment with a new boat was something to think of. Professor Edison had not boasted vainly. All he had claimed for the new submarine, the Destroyer, was fulfilled to the remotest detail.

"This is a wonderful experience," spoke Bob, as the Destroyer, after a slow, gradual dive, righted herself and drove ahead smoothly.

"She is all right," said Bert. "I think the boat can stand any under-surface test."

For some time Bob and Bert went about the different parts of the craft, inspecting its cabins, storage apartments, engineroom and the hold. The stored supply of air kept up a pleasant temperature, and now that the gasoline was no longer in use the electric motor supplied a steady, reliant propelling power.

When they had exhausted the wonders of the craft, Bob and Bert repaired to a little cabin containing two roomy, comfortable bunks. This comprised their own especial living quarters. It had a table and chairs fastened to the floor. They seated themselves one opposite the other, Bob drew out a map, or chart, and spread it open on the table before them.

"Now then, Bert," he said, "to business. I have relied almost entirely upon the tips you have given me for guidance as to the destination of the first dash of the Destroyer."

"I have told you all I know as to the general routine and whereabouts of the Ravager," replied Bert.

"I don't know how I should have got along without your help," said Bob. "Now," and he moved a pencil along the chart, down the whole length of the eastern South American coast around Cape Horn, and paused as he reached the Pacific coast of Chile, "this is our first hunting grounds."

"I think so."

"It is a long voyage," remarked Bob, "but we cannot avoid that. I want to say, Bert, that the question of money cuts no figure in our operations. That means a royal reward for you if we capture the Ravager."

"You can have it all if you will only help me to find Hermione," responded Bert, seriously.

"The Ravager is our first move, you know," said Bob. "Once in possession of that craft and its crew, trust me to force a disclosure of the prison place of the young lady in whom you seem so much interested."

One day was like another for those aboard the Destroyer after that. Progress was now made at the surface of the water. They kept a pennant in view on top of the conning tower in the daytime and a searchlight signal at night. Except that the main body of the Destroyer was under water and its interior artificially lighted at all times, the cruise was as pleasant as a run down the coast on a regular ocean liner.

Everything went smoothly. Captain Mann knew his duties perfectly, and the crew he had engaged comprised high-class mariners, sober, careful and vigilant. They encountered a terrific storm one night, but the Destroyer simply changed power, sank out of danger, and came to the surface again when the skies had cleared.

The great bosom of the placid Pacific was a vast glowing mass of emerald, the sun a blazing sapphire, as the Destroyer came to its first permanent port. The boat was moored in a narrow channel between two islands of a great archipelago group about five miles from the mainland.

It was early the next morning when some small collapsible yawls were got out, and the entire crew allowed to breathe the fresh air and wander about the verdure-covered islands nearest to the Destroyer. Bob led Bert to a rock at a distance from the others. During the voyage they had gone over their plans in detail, but now a moment had arrived where they were fairly on the direct scene of their expected operations.

"You think there is a chance of finding some clew as to the whereabouts of the Ravager at the town near here, down the coast?" asked Bob.

"I feel certain of it," replied Bert, with confidence. "Porto Nueva is the one port that Rodridgo and his boat visited regularly. It is a settlement of social outcasts, who dominate the town and feel themselves safe outside of the pale of the law."

"Then you suggest?"

"First, a disguise."

"And then?"

"I know the ways of the port and its people. I know their language, too. Have me rowed over to the mainland. Within a few hours, I feel sure, I shall have secured some trace of the people you have chased halfway around the world."

Two hours later Bert Noble was taken over to the mainland by Bob in a yawl. The ingenious young detective had provided his loyal friend and ally with a facial disguise difficult to penetrate. He had stained face and hands a deep brown, false eyebrows and a beard and mustache made Bert safe from being recognized by his most intimate former maritime acquaintance as the cabin boy of the Ravager.

Bert proceeded down the desolate beach alone on his way to the town of Porto Nueva. He met no one. Two miles accomplished, he struck inland to make a short cut for the settlement. About noon, hot and tired, he sat down on the banks of a clear crystal-like rivulet emptying into the ocean.

It was weeks since he had seen fresh water in plenty. The pellucid stream seemed cool and inviting. Bert decided to enjoy an invigorating plunge.

He left his clothes piled up on the shore. Then he disported in the bright, sparkling water. He was swimming along quite a distance from his starting place, when a casual glance caused him to shout out sharply:

"Hey, there! What are you up to?"

A young native about his own age was just in the act of throwing off his own clothes and donning those of Bert. At the shout he hurried his movements. Before Bert could swim and then run the distance between the spot where he had halted and that where he had left his clothes, the stranger had undressed and again dressed, made a dive into the tangled wildwood lining the stream, and disappeared from view.

CHAPTER IX.
THE TORPEDO.

"Well, that's cool!" exclaimed Bert.

He arrived at the point on the river bank where he had left his clothes, and gazed at the substituted garments in dismay and chagrin.

The nimble little thief had utterly disappeared. This it was not difficult to do. The tangled wildwood was a veritable jungle and Bert, after a searching glance or two, realized the futility of the chase. He made a wry face as he looked down at the garments at his feet. They were of coarse, ragged material. Whoever their original possessor, he must have come from the poorest class of natives. Bert hesitated for a time at donning the disordered clothes lying at his feet.

"I suppose there's no other way," he spoke at last, with an accent of resignation. "Anyhow, it will help as a further disguise."

Bert, while he dressed, decided that some young native boy, of the thieving type quite common about the district, had simply helped himself to his clothes because a good opportunity of getting away with them offered. Later developments, however, led Bert to understand that, in fact, the native lad, sent on a mission he was too indolent to execute, and provided with a good suit of clothes and the money found in its pockets, had concluded he would run away from home and try life on his own hook at Valparaiso or some other of the large Chilean cities.

"Hello!" ejaculated Bert, as taking up the coat left on the ground he observed that it covered a cubical object about two feet high and half that dimension in diameter.

It was closely covered with a heavy, tightly woven native matting. At the top was a handle formed of the same material. Bert lifted it to find it quite heavy.

"I wonder what it is?" he ruminated. "Something that runaway was sent to deliver, I'll warrant. This is strange."

Across one side of the package in red chalk or liquid stain of the same color was marked some hieroglyphic. The puzzling coincidence that struck Bert was that the same token was marked on the sleeve of the coat.

"That means something," decided Bert, after a thoughtful spell. "I don't know what, but I am going to find out just what it means. These are the only clothes I've got to wear now. I'll just keep on my way to Porto Nueva, mysterious package and all, and see what develops."

Only in a vague way could Bert figure out the probable mission of the boy who had stolen his clothing. He had been sent to deliver something, and had abandoned his trust. Bert could not guess why, but intuitively he fancied the adventure might lead to something.

Bert reached the outskirts of Porto Nueva. He was quite well acquainted with the town, and its strange mixture of squalid huts and crooked streets looked quite familiar to him. As he came down the public highway leading into the town, he espied a man shading his eyes with his hand and peering in his direction. Bert looked him over and was about to pass him, when the fellow, a big, bronzed, fierce-looking native, uttered the sharp sententious mandate:

"Halt!"

Bert came to a stop and the man came up to him. The latter looked down at the hieroglyphics on the package Bert was carrying, and then at its counterpart on his coat sleeve. He pointed to both. Then, looking Bert squarely

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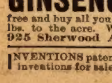

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In the eye, he very deliberately began.

"Hasta que nos——"

Bert gave a great start. A gleam of sudden illumination came into his eyes. The words were Spanish. They were part of a sentence which he had often heard used among the crew of the Ravager as a challenging password when he was a cabin boy on board of that craft.

"Separamos la muerte," Bert finished the sentence, quick as a flash.

"Good!" cried the man, in a pleased tone. "You come from Alcaza. Very fine—and this is it."

Bert nodded and handed over the package. The man gingerly inspected its outlines with curious eyes.

"You—you carry it," he spoke in the native tongue, handing it back to Bert. "Come."

Bert did not know what was going to happen. However, he walked along with the man as the latter led the way briskly. In about half an hour they came to a poor hut in a thickly populated part of the town. Its door had a padlock, which the man unfastened. They entered, and the native shut the door.

"Put it on the table," he ordered, and Bert placed the package as directed.

"The letter," spoke the man next, looking expectantly at Bert.

"Hello!" ejaculated Bert.

"The letter?"

"The letter. Surely Alcaza sent one?"

For the first time Bert inspected a pocket in the coat he wore. Sure enough, there was a letter there. He handed it to the native, who received it eagerly.

The man unfolded the letter and read its contents greedily. Then he pocketed the letter, and taking out a knife began slitting the matting cover to the package.

When he had divested it of its coat of reed straw, the watchful, interested Bert saw that its inclosure was a metal case. Sunk in its top was what resembled the set works of a clock. As the man tipped it up he cautiously unscrewed a bottom cap. Then Bert saw what resembled a great round bar of yellow sulphur, held on a wire netting inside.

"Come," spoke the native again, leaving the strange contrivance on the table, and leading the way from the hut, the door of which he locked securely.

"I'd like to know what this all means," mused Bert. "I hope I am going to find out."

This time the man led the way to a drinking place about a mile distant. He nodded in a friendly way to its proprietor at a bar, who nodded and pointed to the rear of the place. It held two partitioned-off rooms. At the first one the native pointed to a chair.

"Stay here till I have a chat with some friends," he said.

"All right," nodded Bert.

When the native passed into the adjoining apartment, closing the door after him, there was a clamorous welcome. Some one called to the landlord, and drinks were brought in. Bert could hear all that was said in the inner room. As the first hail of friendly conversation was over, a gruff voice demanded:

"Did you get the torpedo?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"I will deliver it to you when the money is paid."

"Good; I have orders to pay you liberally."

"Very well."

"Did Alcaza make the torpedo so it will not fail us?"

"Of a surety. In his letter he says it can be set at any hour to explode, and that it would shatter a mountain to atoms."

"A torpedo!" echoed Bert, excitedly, under his breath.

"Very well," spoke the same gruff voice, and Bert now knew that its owner must be an emissary from his dreaded former master, the commander of the Ravager. "Rodridgo has ordered me to give you another commission to execute."

"For still more money?"

"Always, my friend."

"Excellent."

"We will now talk that over. Then we will go for the torpedo."

"As you say."

"Where is it?"

"At my hut. But say, Pietro, I am curious. What do you want the torpedo for?"

"You may know that, for are we not all good friends?"

"Surely."

"An enemy is on the trail of the Ravager."

"An enemy?"

"Yes."

"Who is it?"

"A rival submarine, even more powerful than our own."

"Ah! Its name?"

"The Destroyer. Our ally, Blauvelt, has informed us. We have them watching for it. The Destroyer is now in these waters."

"Then the torpedo?"

"Will, within the next few days, blow the Destroyer and all on board into a million atoms."

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

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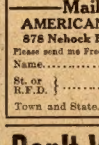

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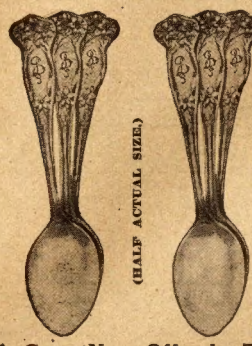

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"Why Lug in Solomon?"

President Taft has a rich fund of anecdotes at his command, and is apt in applying them in his everyday conversation. One day Secretary Hilles directed his attention to a letter that had been received at the White House from an Ohio admirer of the President. The Ohioan was stirred up over the attacks that had been made on the President by the Republican insurgents, and, after citing the things the President had accomplished—his Supreme Court appointments, the arbitration treaties, Canadian reciprocity, the tariff board, the averting of war with Mexico, the trust prosecution—the man in the Buckeye State ended with the declaration that in his opinion Mr. Taft was the greatest ruler since the days of Solomon. The President turned to Hilles with a smile and said:

"Hilles, did you ever hear the story of the man who was under the impression that he was an orator, and who couldn't understand why his friends didn't congratulate him after a particularly laborious effort? He waited as long as he could stand it, and then asked one of them how he liked his speech.

"'Best that has been delivered since the days of Edmund Burke,' said this friend.

"'Yes,' replied the orator, after a few moments of serious thought, 'but why lug in Burke?'

"'Why lug in Solomon?' added the President, chuckling and turning once more to the papers on his desk.

Spasms With a Purpose.

There were unmistakable groans coming from underneath the Bilkins library window, and Dobson, who was spending a week-end on the Bilkins farm, upon investigation of the bloodcurdling sounds, discovered that they were coming from the Bilkins donkey, a gray-haired old reprobate belonging to the consuming rather than the producing class. The beast was standing out on the lawn emitting the most strident sounds.

"What the dickens is the matter with that donkey of yours, Bilkins? Is he sick?" asked Dobson, gazing at the animal with an expression of mingled contempt and pity.

"No, he isn't sick," said Bilkins. "Why on earth should you think he was sick?"

"Why, he's groaning like thunder out there," said Dobson. "He doesn't do that just for fun, does he?"

"Oh, that's it, eh?" laughed Bilkins. "Well, don't you worry. He's all right. You see, six weeks ago, when we first came down, just about this time of the morning he had an attack of colic, and having nothing else to dose him with, I gave him a tumblerful of Scotch whisky, and the little cuss has come groaning under my window at this time of day every morning since. He gets over it after a few ineffectual spasms."—Judge.

Gerald—The price of lobsters has gone up.

Geraldine—That can't be helped now and then, when every man has his price.

Refused to Pay.

An old north-country farmer visiting London put up at one of the big hotels. He had barely turned in on the first night when the "buttons" rushed into the room and switched on the electric light, exclaiming:

"Make haste, sir! Get up! The hotel is on fire."

The old man slowly raised himself on one elbow, and, fixing the boy with a determined look, remarked:

"Mind ye, if I do, I winna pay for the bed."

Forgot His Part.

"You can never tell in this world what will happen next," said Charles Findley. "I remember some years ago Tom Riley and myself were with a stranded variety show in Mississippi, and it was six o'clock one evening that we were walking along a dusty road wondering where our next meal would come from. Finally I observed a big house standing off from the road and decided to go in and try for something to eat, while Tom agreed to wait outside.

"Well, I walked right up to the front door and when a lady answered my knock I pretended to be deaf and dumb, making signs that I wanted to eat. She immediately invited me inside, and after eating to my heart's content I joined Tom, who was getting hungry as a bear.

"As there was no other house in sight he decided to try the same stunt, and following my instructions soon found himself in the presence of the lady I had talked to. Several minutes later Tom was about to seat himself at the table that I had left a few minutes before.

"'So you are deaf and dumb, too?' asked the lady.

"'Yes,' replied Tom, smiling.

"He went without his supper that night."

The Difference.

Rev. Archibald D. Pinkerton, the well-known Christian Socialist of Duluth, said in a recent address:

"I asked a crusty old millionaire the other day to contribute to our book fund. He frowned and said:

"'So you're a Socialist, eh?'

"'Yes, sir,' said I.

"'Well, tell me what a Socialist is,' said he.

"'But you must tell me first,' said I, 'what sort of a Socialist you mean—a political Socialist or a Christian Socialist, for there is a vast difference. The political Socialist says, "What's yours is mine." But the Christian Socialist says, "What's mine is yours."'"

Politics may be all right as a game—but not as a business.

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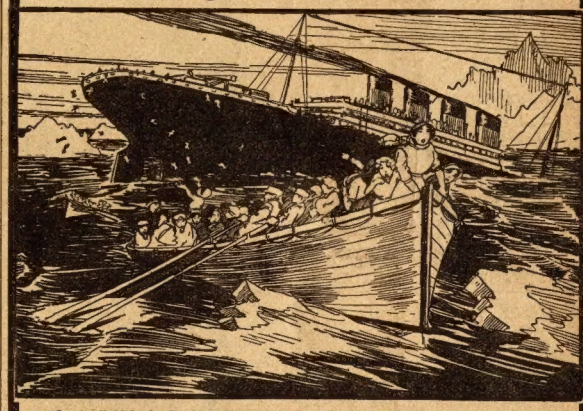

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Scenes too terrible to describe in the newspapers were enacted; much that happened could not be told—much was hushed up, and it remained for the special investigators of the publishers of this great book to uncover the truth. It places the guilt—it tells thrilling tales of heroism and cowardice—it tells the truth, and the truth in this terrible catastrophe is stranger than fiction.

The whole world mourns the heroes who met their death like men that the women and children might be saved.

What the Survivors Told

to the special investigators of the publishers of this book throws a new light on the horror of it.

Many who had refused to divulge their secrets were made to tell what they knew for the readers of this great book and their stirring stories, their descriptions of the heart-rending scenes make the greatest reading and brings the accident clearly to your mind. Besides all this the entire proceedings of the Government investigation are faithfully reported.

And the Photographs!

The book is profusely illustrated with actual photographs and sketches by artists and eye witnesses of the wreck. These photographs start in and show the construction and launching of this monster of the sea; it shows it while building and afterwards when it proudly strode the sea.

Then it shows actual photographs by passengers of the Carpathia—the steamer that rescued 800. There are pen sketches by survivors and also photographs of the Mackay-Bennett, the boat that recovered 359 bodies from the merciless grasp of the sea.

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THE FAIRY CORNER

MYSTERY SOLVED.

When Teddy was a little boy somebody gave him a pretty gray squirrel that was so lively and so graceful in all his movements that Teddy called him Frisk. Teddy's papa made a nice little box for him and fastened it securely to a branch of a maple tree, so that he might have a house all his own.

When the squirrel came to live with Teddy he was shy and afraid of strangers, but when he found no one wanted to hurt him he was quite willing to be friends with everybody. He liked Teddy best of all, and the two passed many happy hours playing together. Sometimes he would scramble up Teddy's back and take a ride on his shoulder. Then he would dive into his pockets to see if there were any peanuts in them.

He was fond of corn. Once when Teddy forgot to feed him he stole an ear out of the pony's manger and, taking one end in his mouth, ran lightly along the fence and up the tree to his favorite nook. There he sat and nibbled at the kernels, holding the ear with his queer little hands and stopping now and then to scold Teddy, who stood watching him. When he had finished his dinner he crowded the ear down in a crotch of the tree, so he might save it for next time.

Early in the summer he began to keep a sharp lookout for nuts to bury. If Teddy gave him more than he cared to eat at one time he slipped away and hid them.

"He never can find 'em all again," Teddy said to his mamma. "He's got nuts buried all over our yard. He doesn't know where they are, I'm sure."

But Teddy was wrong. Frisk did know, and sometimes he dug them up to eat. This is the way he buried them: He made a little three-cornered tear in the sod, and then he pushed the nut under and patted it down with his deft little paws until you might have looked closely and never guessed that a nut was hidden there.

If he could not get nuts he would carry ripe seeds from the maples. A large hickory tree grew close to the side of the house, and when the first frosts sent the nuts pattering down in a shower he worked with might and main. There were no more moments wasted in chasing the blue jays, which he delighted to tease.

"Where does he put so many?" asked Teddy. "He can't bury them all. The front yard would not begin to hold them."

Frisk looked up from the nut he was eating and chattered something that Teddy could not understand. He shook his finger at his little chum.

"You little rogue of a squirrel," Ted said, "I will find your storehouse yet."

But he did not, although he hunted high and low. When he peeped into odd places, Frisk would watch him with his tail curled gracefully over his back and his black eyes fairly dancing with mischief. Then he would pick up a nut right before Teddy's face and whisk away up the tree with it.

So the pleasant autumn days went by until the nuts were all gathered. Teddy had long ago given up hunting for Frisk's hoard and was looking forward to Thanksgiving Day. And when it came at last, bringing with it all of Teddy's aunts and uncles and cousins to pass the day, he had so many other happy things to think about that he quite forgot his little friend.

The long beautiful day passed all too quickly. The cousins that were staying in the house gathered about the fireplace to crack nuts and tell stories. It seemed as if they had hardly begun before the clock struck nine.

"Come, laddies," said Teddy's mamma, "keep your stories for another time." She looked down into their eager, pleading faces, and a happy thought came to her.

"Forward, Bedtime Brigade! March to your tents," she said gayly.

The boys laughed and fell into line, two by two, and marched to the tune she hummed. At the head of the stairs they halted.

"Let me see," said mamma; "where shall I quarter you all? Oh, I know. Joe and Harry may share Ted's room. Then Ted and Ralph and Roy can sleep in the big bed in the spare room. Come, my soldiers," and she led the way.

The bed in the spare chamber was a big, old-fashioned four-poster that would easily have held a dozen boys. The three thought it was great fun to have it all themselves. They played that they were real soldiers who had reached camp after a long and painful march. But when Ralph as a scout crept under the covers first, his feet touched something round and hard.

"Ted," he exclaimed, "have you been hiding your marbles in here?"

"Marbles!" said Teddy, his eyes big with surprise. "No, why should I?"

Then Ralph threw back the quilts and they found—what do you suppose? Why, Frisk's winter supply of nuts. The little rogue had slipped in through an open window and hidden them in the last place that Teddy would ever have thought of searching in.

Tamey's Radish.

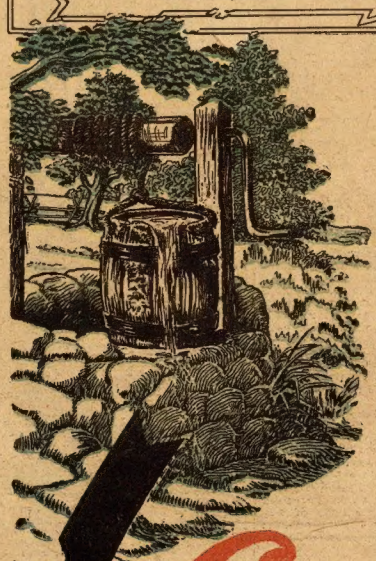
Three little children went away to the country for the summer and had a most beautiful time. Each of the children had a little garden in which to grow peas, beans and radishes and other interesting plants. For pets they had about a dozen chickens.

One day when they were pulling up some radishes for the table they found one that was too long and too thin to be of any good, and so they gave it to the chickens. As soon as they had thrown the radish through the wire netting a small white rooster about eight inches tall, whom the children called Tamey because he was so tame, made a rush at the radish and got it. He made such a fuss over it that all the other chickens came running up to see what was the matter. For fifteen minutes poor Tamey was chased this way and that.

At last, when they left him in peace for about a quarter of a second he began swallowing that whole long radish as fast as he could, beginning at the big end. When there was nothing but the root sticking out of his mouth and he was just beginning to feel sure of it, another chicken without any manners at all caught hold of the root and pulled the whole thing out again. Wasn't that distressing for poor Tamey?

You should have seen the way Tamey chased that other chicken. In about two minutes he got him in a corner and took away his radish. Then away he scuttled and gulped that radish down as fast as he possibly could.

The children thought that after eating that enormous radish Tamey would not be hungry again for a week, but no sooner had the last of the root disappeared than Tamey began hunting eagerly about for something else to eat.



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